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Naked and Afraid, produced by Renegade 83 for Discovery Channel, has resuscitated both the survival and social experiment genres. (Photographer: Chris Horangic; photo courtesy of Discovery Channel)

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From the team behind
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PLUS ÇA CHANGE...

For all of us, change is the constant. It is momentum's fuel; the enemy of, and antidote to, stasis. It isn't always pretty, and it isn't always fun. But it always *is*.

We've all watched as unscripted or, in layperson's terms, reality programming came to rule the roost on cable and broadcast television, and now we're all watching as scripted programming roars back into vogue and muscles into the skeds of predominantly unscripted networks.

We've also watched as what's called traditional documentary seemingly fell out of favor on those non-fiction oriented nets, only to be increasingly embraced through festivals with ever-growing attendance numbers, emerging online platforms, and now, even the odd cable network.

And of course, we've also watched as the independent production sector has transformed itself through waves of consolidation, mergers and acquisition. As we were headed to press, a veritable billion dollar week for unscripted prodco deals - the ITV acquisition of Leftfield Entertainment and the acquisition of All3Media by Discovery Communications and Liberty Global - was becoming old news with word of another potentially massive game-changer of a deal, the merger of Endemol, Shine Group and Core Media Group.

I've been happy to have had a ringside seat for a lot of this excitement, through leading the editorial team here for the past five and a half years. But speaking of change, as a good number of you know, the time has come for me to embrace it and move on to a new role, that of work-from-home dad, as my wife returns to her career following maternity leave. In order to do the best I can in this new stage of my life, given that my wife and I have already devoured scores of parenting books, I'll be sure to immerse myself in episodes of A&E's *Modern Dads*, back-to-back with countless viewings of Michael Keaton's *Mr. Mom*.

In all seriousness, I'm very happy to know that the next person in this position is going to be leading an editorial team at the top of its game, and contributing to a brand that has never been stronger.

I'd like to thank everyone I've had the pleasure of meeting over the last five and a half years through the magazine and, of course, through our market-leading events. And I'd like to thank those of you who've let me know when we could be doing things better. I'm confident that with some of the initiatives on the way for the year ahead, you'll see that we don't take your interest or support for granted, and that resting on laurels has never been the *realscreen* style.

I'm pleased to say that I'll still be involved with the brand in some capacity, to help bring some of these initiatives to fruition. That role has yet to be determined, but there has been talk of bringing on a *realscreen* team mascot for the Summit. Fingers crossed...

Lastly, let me thank Claire Macdonald, who after an interview at a local coffee shop, offered me an opportunity for which I'll be forever grateful. Whoever's up next in this spot should rest assured that they couldn't ask for a better partner in crime, or a more inspiring leader to look up to.

Cheers,
Barry Walsh
Editor and content director
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END OF AN ERA

Six years ago, when I came on board as publisher of *realscreen*, I brought with me years of experience in publishing and business development, but scant knowledge of the unscripted entertainment world. Very soon after I joined, the editor's chair was vacated as Brendan Christie moved on to new opportunities, and I was left with a colossal challenge to find the right person to lead *realscreen*'s editorial direction in tandem with our vision for the brand's development.

Enter Barry Walsh.

Barry didn't have to move his belongings too far as he literally relocated a few desks down from his then position as associate editor of now defunct sister publication *'boards*, which focused on the international commercial production industry. Starting at the beginning of November, a mere three months ahead of our first Realscreen Summit, Barry was quick to immerse himself in the industry and figure out who the players were. Calling in the help of Heidi Rotter as conference producer, and an advisory board comprised of Nancy Dubuc, John Ford, Alex Graham, Michael Hoff, Sayumi Horie, Ann Julianne and Uwe Kersken, we somehow managed to pull off Realscreen Summit 2009 with minimal hitches and great feedback.

Buoyed by our achievements, we decided it was high time to launch an LA-based conference to service the needs of the unscripted industry that was clearly booming on the West Coast. And so *realscreen*'s Factual Entertainment Forum came to be.

Fast forward to June 2014. This year's Realscreen West (formerly the Factual Entertainment Forum) has attracted just about as many delegates as Realscreen Summit in 2009, while this year's DC event drew two-and-a-half times the audience of our first Summit as a team, and we are set to launch Realscreen London. Our website traffic is through the roof, our subscription base is multiplying, and our advertising revenue still justifies publishing a magazine – quite something in 2014.

Much of the brand's trajectory can be ascribed to the growth of the unscripted industry on a global basis. But from my POV, as much credit goes to the team that works tirelessly to create meaningful experiences for our community at our live events, while providing credible, useful information and thought leadership that can help drive business forward. To that end, Barry has been a partner all the way, earning the trust of the industry at large through his outstanding editorial judgment and thoughtful analysis. As he moves on to his next adventure, I will miss his wit and counsel terribly, but I'm very pleased that he will be staying on with us as a contributor and consultant. Cheers Barry!

'til next time go well
Claire Macdonald
VP & Publisher
realscreen



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MONROE'S MOMENT

BY ADAM BENZINE

With the departures of David Lyle and Howard T. Owens in April, chief marketing officer Courteney Monroe has stepped up to become the new CEO of National Geographic Channels U.S. In her first major interview as chief exec, she tells *realscreen* what to expect.



National Geographic Channel (NGC) unveiled an unexpected one-two punch in mid-April, first announcing that president Howard T. Owens would be leaving, and then – a day later – that chief exec David Lyle would also be exiting.

With their departures, the U.S. cable network's board has put its faith in chief marketing officer Courteney Monroe, promoting her to CEO. Monroe has been with the network since 2012, and before that spent more than 13 years as HBO's exec VP for consumer marketing and digital platforms.

The promotion, which took effect on May 1, puts her in charge of all American operations, including Nat Geo Wild, Nat Geo Mundo, and the flagship U.S. channel. "I'm still very new to this," she reminds *realscreen*, talking by phone from DC just a few weeks into her new role.

"I'm on an active listening tour, both internally and externally, to hear what people think is working best about the National Geographic Channel, and where people see the biggest opportunity," she says.

Alongside her elevation, NGC U.S. has also appointed a chairman, bringing in David Hill – who currently serves as senior exec VP of 21st

Century Fox and is a member of the NGC board of directors – to provide "counsel to the executive and programming leadership team," according to the network. While some trades have interpreted this as a move which will see Hill "taking the helm," Monroe is keen to assert that she will be the one holding the reins.

"David's amazing, and he is so passionate about the National Geographic Channel brand," she says. "He is very much rooting for our success and is there to help us as much or as little as we need. I report to the board of directors, so it's still very much the reporting structure that David Lyle had. But it's great to have David [Hill] available in an advisory role to help in whatever way we need him to."

With the brand having undergone an overhaul in 2011 through the arrival of Lyle and Owens, Monroe says she is not planning on radically altering the network's formula, but instead plans to build upon the existing set-up.

"I see this not as pursuing more transformational change, but about how we can take the channel to new heights off of the great foundation that has been built," she explains. "How do we focus our efforts on the things that have worked best for us and continue to strive to be the smartest, most authentic, most visually spectacular factual channel in cable?"

"David Lyle and Howard Owens really brought a huge amount of transformational change to the National Geographic Channel, in terms of the programming we develop and the fact that we now work with the best in the business in the production and creative community – people who just three years ago were not even bringing their ideas to us."

NGC U.S. will continue to push "smartertainment" titles such as *Brain Games* and *Going Deep with David Rees*, which hit the sweet spot with the network's target audience, but Monroe feels there is still an opportunity to "hone it a little bit more" in terms of viewer appeal.

"We do have a core non-fiction audience that tends to skew male," she says. "We won't be walking away from our core audience, but I do think we may be looking at pockets of potentially underserved audiences that we can uniquely serve."

One difference between Monroe and her predecessor – which has also caught the eyes of the press – is that the new CEO comes from a marketing background, and does not have hands-on experience as a program-maker. While Monroe admits that she is "a brand person first and foremost," she believes the skills she's gained at HBO and NGC to date will stand her in good stead for the challenges ahead.

"Marketing professionals are always very focused on, 'Who's the target audience, what is it they're hungry for, what's the best way to reach them and satiate them, and what's the space in the marketplace that our brand can really win?'" she says. "And I think that's very much my focus as well; saying, 'Let's be very clear about the audience we're going after.'"

And to producers thinking of pitching to NGC, Monroe's message is: "We want to be daring and not derivative."

She adds: "I am acutely aware that the way to be distinct is to take risks, and that is what energizes me and the creative people at our channel. For 126 years, National Geographic Explorers have gone to places that nobody else has by being incredibly daring and audacious in their vision, and that's very much in the heritage and the DNA of the brand."

"Those are the values that I want to embody."



MALIK BENDJELLOUL: 1977-2014

Documentary fans and industry figures are still grappling with shock and grief following the mid-May death of *Searching for Sugar Man* director Malik Bendjelloul.

Bendjelloul's body was found in Stockholm on May 13. According to Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*, which quoted the director's older brother Johar Bendjelloul, the 36-year-old Oscar-winner took his own life after battling with depression. Police have said that they are not treating the death as suspicious.

Simon Chinn, who produced *Sugar Man* together with Bendjelloul, wrote on Twitter that the director was "the sweetest and most guileless of men," and said he was shocked by the news.

Michael Barker and Tom Bernard at Sony Pictures Classics, distributors of *Searching for Sugar Man*, added: "Much like [*Sugar Man* subject and musician] Rodriguez himself, Malik was a genuine person who chased the world for stories to tell. He didn't chase fame, fortune or awards, although those accolades still found him as many others recognized his storytelling."

Doc directors Asif Kapadia, Dawn Porter, Lucy Walker, Michael Moore, Jeanie Finlay and Tracy Droz Tragos also paid tribute via social media as did organizations such as Cinema Eye Honors, BAFTA, 'POV' and Dogwoof, alongside senior execs from festivals including TIFF, Sheffield Doc/Fest (which opened its festival with *Sugar Man* in 2012) and Hot Docs.

Bendjelloul wrote, directed and produced *Sugar Man*, his feature doc debut, releasing it in 2012. It opened Sundance that year, where it won an audience award, before going on to win more than 30 other major prizes, including honors from the DGA, the IDA, IDFA and BAFTA, and the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature in 2013.

He is survived by his parents and his brother. **AB**

POINTED ARROW: A Producer's Perspective

BY JOHN SMITHSON

There's been plenty of eye catching deals of late, in which smart indie producers have been snapped up for princely sums. But the price paid for Leftfield Entertainment was remarkable – US\$360 million for 80% of the company.

It is a fantastic achievement for an indie that delivered just one hour in 2007. Hats off to founder and CEO Brent Montgomery and his team, who have proved themselves to be masterful players of the contemporary unscripted TV market.

Nothing drives a big deal more than a hit show, and *Pawn Stars* is History's number one show worldwide, with 394 episodes produced to date.

I was at Leftfield's impressive New York office a couple of years ago, and it was a Henry Ford moment. Here was an efficient, modern TV production line turning out hundreds of hours of well-cast, compelling and extremely watchable popular shows. Nice work, Mr. Montgomery, and a neat move for ITV which overnight may have become the biggest unscripted producer in the U.S.

One day later, Discovery Communications, fresh from its acquisition of Raw TV, continued its London shopping trip by scooping up All3Media, in partnership with Liberty Global. \$930 million bought 19 production and distribution companies, including big players such as Lion, Maverick, North One, Optomen and Studio Lambert. It's going to be fascinating to see how things evolve, now that this factual giant has such a stable of significant producers under its wing.

I used to think the balance of power was tilting towards the producers and away from the broadcasters. But with so many indies now under broadcaster ownership, I think we are witnessing the pendulum swinging back the other way.

It's not only the corporate finance teams that have been keeping busy of late. There have been big changes at the top of networks on both sides of the pond, with a number of executives moving on to pastures new. For producers it's unsettling, because

in this business, which is totally relationship focused, executive change can be damaging to day-to-day partnerships. Most frustrating of all is when your favorite project, painstakingly developed with the old regime and agonizingly close to a green light, is killed off by the new regime as it seeks to impose its own stamp on the production slate.

But I also see it as an opportunity. Recalibrating relationships can often bring good things, and in a creative world, a creative reboot is ultimately good for everyone.

The incredible success of live factual events has been a big talking point in recent times. Discovery's *Everest Jump Live* was set to be the most spectacular of all. Californian adventurer Joby Ogwyn was to attempt a breathtaking wing suit flight from the summit of the world's highest mountain.

Everyone working on Everest is aware of the dangers of this hostile environment, but no one would have dared imagine the tragedy that occurred in the icefall that towers above Everest's base camp on April 18. Sixteen sherpas were killed in a deadly avalanche as they were hauling gear up the mountain. Three of them were working for Ogwyn's team. In the emotionally charged aftermath, the sherpas decided to leave the mountain, ending the climbing season.

Discovery had no choice but to pull out, rightly making a quick turnaround special on the tragedy that they witnessed first-hand.

While the event is sure to provoke some hard thinking it certainly does not mean the end of live. Fox has announced *The Jump of the Century* in which two stuntmen will try to replicate Evel Knievel's famous failed jump from 40 years ago across Idaho's 2,300-foot-deep Snake River Canyon, and there are plenty more audacious projects in the pipeline.

John Smithson is creative director of Arrow Media, an indie he co-founded in 2011. Previously, he was chief executive of Darlow Smithson Productions.

ENDEMOL, SHINE, CORE MEDIA TO MERGE?

Hollywood studio 21st Century Fox and Apollo Global Management are in talks to form a landscape-changing TV joint venture. The Rupert Murdoch-owned company issued a statement on May 15, confirming that it has reached a preliminary agreement with the private equity firm to merge its Shine Group with Apollo-controlled producers Endemol and Core Media Group.

“21st Century Fox confirms its intent to form a joint venture with funds managed by affiliates of Apollo Global Management comprised of Endemol, Shine Group and Core Media Group,” the company said.

“The parties have entered into a preliminary agreement, subject to a number of conditions, which calls for 21st Century Fox and funds managed by affiliates of Apollo to jointly own and manage the new joint venture. There can be no assurance that the proposed transaction will be completed.”

The merger would effectively create a global super-indie that brings unscripted franchises *MasterChef*, *The Biggest Loser*, *Big Brother*, *Deal or No Deal*, *So You Think You Can Dance* and *American Idol* under one roof.

Earlier in May, Discovery Communications and Liberty Global teamed up to acquire London-based All3Media in a US\$930 million deal, media giant Viacom purchased British pubcaster Channel 5 for \$757 million and Britain’s ITV bought *Pawn Stars* producer Leftfield Entertainment for \$360 million. **Kevin Ritchie**



BEST PRACTICES: HOW TO JOB HUNT SUCCESSFULLY

BY CHRIS PALMER AND JAZMIN GARCIA

Searching for and finding a job can be a laborious process. Whether you have been through several interviews in the recent past or your last interview was 10 years ago, job seekers face numerous pitfalls. Here are six mistakes you should avoid:

In an interview, never ask, “What does this company do?” Hiring managers viscerally cringe when they hear questions like that. Do not go into an interview unprepared. Research the company, the position you are applying for, and the person who is interviewing you. If possible, have a point of contact with the company before you even apply, either through LinkedIn or another professional method. Become familiar with the company’s mission statement and ask well-considered questions the day of the interview.

Plant seeds In the process of searching for a job, you might find yourself at a few career or networking events. Be prepared with a concise speech describing who you are and what your career goal is. Have business cards and a couple of résumés handy. Although you might not walk out with a job, you are still planting seeds for a future meaningful relationship. Promptly follow up with those people with whom you’ve connected. When contacting them, do not directly ask for a job. Instead, thank them for their time, follow up with any specific information you learned at the meeting, and offer your help and knowledge to them.

Never assume your résumé is already at it’s best Did you notice the grammatical error here? We guarantee that the hiring manager will. Double, triple, and quadruple check for spelling and punctuation errors. Do not solely rely on your word processor. Once you perfect your cover letter and résumé have a colleague or advisor review them.

Customize your outreach Once you have found a position for which you are qualified, write a personalized cover letter and tailor your résumé. Remember that your cover letter is as important as your résumé, so make it warm, enthusiastic, and distinctive.

Practice makes perfect Whether you are entering the workforce for the first time or are a well-seasoned professional, interviews can be challenging. Reach out to organizations that provide career counseling. Many of these will conduct mock interviews with you. Practicing your responses aloud can make you aware of unnecessary repetition or ticks a lot of us have. Be ready for curveballs the interviewer might throw your way. Your goal is to create a level of trust with the interviewer and ultimately, a real connection.

Monitor your social media footprint Be aware of the content you post on social media sites since employers often peruse a candidate’s pages. It is not only a photograph that can dismay a potential employer, but negative comments about your current employer or anything that seems disrespectful or harebrained. On the same note, make sure to use a professional email address on your résumé and business cards. Hiring managers might not have your sense of humor.

Landing a job is a competition. You wouldn’t enter a race without training, so don’t enter the job market without thorough preparation.

Professor Chris Palmer is the founding director of American University’s Center for Environmental Filmmaking and author of the Sierra Club book Shooting in the Wild: An Insider’s Account of Making Movies in the Animal Kingdom. Jazmin Garcia is a filmmaker and MA candidate at American University. •

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ON THE SLATE

For 2014-2015, U.S. cable nets are putting new spins on proven genres – survival shows, dating, and yes, more Alaska – and bringing back some familiar faces, while experimenting with more live stunts and real-time reality.

A+E NETWORKS

Mafia characters, football moms and reality show producers will be among the characters in A&E's expanded unscripted slate of four new series and four pilots.

Series premiering this fall include the Custom Productions and Redtail Media-produced series *Dogs of War* (5 x 60 minutes), on a not-for-profit organization that pairs PTSD-afflicted veterans with therapy dogs; and the Renegade 83, Grainey Pictures and Brookline Ice Films-made *Godfather of Pittsburgh* (8 x 60 minutes), which follows a first-generation Italian American struggling to remain lawful while running an empire of nightclubs and restaurants.

The original series with summer premieres include the Leftfield Pictures-produced social experiment series *Love Prison* (working title; 10 x 30 minutes), in which online couples meet for the first time on a remote island; and the 12 Forward Entertainment-produced *Lone Star Lady* (9 x 30 minutes), on a wealthy football mom in Johnson City, Texas, raising four boys.

Meanwhile, the pilots in development for A&E include *Big Brew Theory* (w/t) – produced by 44 Blue Productions, Closest to the Hole Productions, Leverage Entertainment, Dunlop Entertainment and Bill Thompson Productions – on four MIT grad students creating a micro-brewery; the Wolf Reality and 44 Blue Productions-made *Nightwatch*, which covers New Orleans' emergency response units; the MY Tupelo Entertainment-made *The Unproducibleables* (w/t), on producer Mark Efmanas' efforts in creating a reality series on senior citizens at a Florida retirement center; and Relativity Television's *8 Minutes*, on a pair of former police officers going on eight-minute undercover missions to get young sex workers out of the business.

Regarding other nets in the A+E stable, History will be featuring summer premieres for *Biker Battleground Phoenix*, a series from Adjacent Productions looking at the world of custom bike building, and *Pawnography*, a 10-episode game show from Leftfield Entertainment based on its massive hit *Pawn Stars*. New lifestyle net FYI, meanwhile, has greenlit foodie-friendly programming such as the Nerd TV-produced series *Midnight Feast* and the pilots *Say It to My Face* from Pie Town Productions and *Reverse Course* from Stick Figure Studios.

Manori Ravindran (with files from Barry Walsh)

ANIMAL PLANET

For 2014-2015, Animal Planet has renewed 11 series, including *River Monsters*, *Treehouse Masters*, and *My Cat From Hell!* and is bringing back its popular 'Monster Week' and Puppy Bowl events.

Leading the network's slate of new titles is the special *The Yao Ming Project* (working title), which follows the basketball star as he travels to Africa to witness illegal poaching and lobbies the Chinese government to end the trade of illegal ivory and rhino horns in China.

Revenge of the Whale (working title) is a two-hour scripted coproduction with the BBC about the story that inspired Herman Melville's classic book *Moby Dick*. Martin Sheen stars as Old Thomas Nickerson, a former cabin boy on the ill-fated whaling ship Essex. It also stars Jonas Armstrong and Adam Rayner.

Other specials set to air over the next year include *Last North*, which follows polar explorer Eric Larsen on a 49-day expedition across the North Pole; the wildlife doc *Primates: Clash of Kingdoms* (working title); *Snow Wolf Family* (working title), director Gordon Buchanan's

wildlife doc set on Ellesmere Island in Canada; *Surviving The Kill Zone*, a wildlife doc shot in Zambia's Luangwa Valley using 65 remote-controlled cameras; and *Walking the Nile* (working title), which follows writer and photographer Levison Wood on a 4,250-mile walking trek along the full length of the Nile River.

Animal Planet will also air the wildlife specials *Wild Asia*, *Wild Australia* and *Wild Mexico*.

New series on the network's slate include *Deadly Islands*, starring predator expert Dave Salmoni; *Ice Lake Rebels*, a survival series set on Great Slave Lake in Canada's Northwest Territories; and *Pool Master*, starring an eccentric designer and sculptor who creates swimming pools that resemble nature.

Redwood Kings follows twin brothers who turn reclaimed redwood trees into works of art; *Rocky Mountain Bounty Hunters* follows two teams of fugitive retrieval agents who go after armed delinquents hiding out in mountainous terrain; and *My Tiny Terror* (working title) stars dog trainer Jacqueline Wilson who specializes in tiny, problematic canines. **Kevin Ritchie**



The stars of *Primates: Clash of the Kingdoms* react to the news of the cancellation of *Community*.



Socialities reign supreme in Bravo's *Ladies of London*.

BRAVO

Bravo has greenlit *100 Dates* (working title), a "real-time docudrama" from coproducers All3Media America, Goodbye Pictures and Lime Pictures. The show follows a group of young New York singles on the market for romance, and each episode will be shot and aired within the same week.

Also greenlit is the World of Wonder-produced social experiment *Friends to Lovers?*, a series that asks multiple sets of friends to become lovers to see if their relationships can last (see pg. 29).

On the food front, *Best New Restaurant* is an out-of-studio culinary competition hosted by *Top Chef* judge Tom Colicchio from One Potato Two Potato and executive producer Gordon Ramsay. The show pits 16 restaurants against each other in a series of challenges to determine which is best.

Meanwhile, the previously announced *Top Chef* spin-off *Top Chef Extreme* has been renamed *Top Chef Duels*. The Magical Elves-produced culinary competition brings back 18 contestants from past seasons of *Top Chef* and *Top Chef Masters*.

Docusoaps include the Sirens Media-produced series *Manzo'd with Children*, which stars Caroline Manzo of *The Real Housewives of New Jersey* and her family. *Euros of Hollywood* from Core Media Group follows six Europeans, including an Albanian pop star and a self-proclaimed Italian Renaissance man, as they pursue the American dream in Los Angeles.

The docuseries *Ladies of London* is produced by Adjacent Productions and follows a group of British and American socialites in the British capital; the World of Wonder-produced *Million Dollar Listing Miami* takes the property franchise into the world of luxury real estate in Miami; and *Untying the Knot* from Engel Entertainment stars family mediator and "divorce diva" Vikki Ziegler. All three shows are due to premiere in June.

Game of Crowns is a Shed Media US-produced show about women competing on the "Mrs." pageant circuit. *Extreme Guide to Parenting*, produced by Punched in the Head Productions, looks at parenting methods in two different households in each episode. Both shows are scheduled to debut in July.

In Authentic Entertainment's docuseries *Jersey Belle*, New Jersey native and Hollywood publicist Jaime Primak Sullivan adjusts to life in an upscale Alabama suburb; and *Real Housewives of Atlanta* star Kandi Burruss gets married to Todd Tucker in the spin-off, *The Real Housewives of Atlanta: Kandi's Wedding* (working title).

Leading Bravo's unscripted development slate is *Going Gone* (working title), a live televised estate sale from FremantleMedia North America and exec producer Thom Beers. The show is to be shot in wealthy homes and lets viewers bid on items such as a hand-sewn peacock feather dress worn by model Naomi Campbell and a leather knife roll used by chef Wolfgang Puck.

Gen XYZ (working title), from Morgan Spurlock's Warrior Poets and Crybaby Media, follows six women from four different generations who are attempting to take their careers in fashion and beauty to the next level.

Meanwhile, the Monkey Kingdom-produced *Tour Group* (working title) is a luxury travel docuseries that follows vacationers on a dream holiday to the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

Other projects in development, all with working titles, include Loud TV's adventure reality series *Crowd Control*; *Fempire*, which follows female CEOs excelling in their careers but struggling with their personal lives; *The Fit Club*, a docuseries following personal trainers from All3Media America and Lime Pictures; romance docuseries *Last Chance* from Wilshire Studios and Iron Ocean; and *Why Not Minot?*, Leftfield Entertainment's look at modern-day Gold Rush town Minot, North Dakota. **KR with files from MR**

CMT

Country music-focused U.S. net CMT is launching a News & Docs division, with Morgan Spurlock and Ridley Scott among those tapped for the initial slate.

Unveiling the new division at the Viacom network's upfront presentation in New York, CMT's exec VP of programming and development Jayson Dinsmore said that it would launch with a slate of "bold and compelling stories that reflect big personalities and monumental events that helped define America, our music and our spirit."

He added: "We've partnered with some of the most respected and visionary filmmakers working today, all charged with producing unique documentaries through an authentic and distinctive lens."

Forthcoming documentaries will include *Promiseland* from executive producer Scott; *They Called Us Outlaws*, from filmmaker Eric Geadelmann and Academy Award-winner Mark Johnson; *Freedom*, from Academy Award-nominee Spurlock; and *Urban Legend: When a Nation Went Country*, from John Dorsey and Andrew Stephan, the producers of ESPN's *Pony Excess*.

Promiseland, which is being made by Scott's prodco Scott Free Productions, is a four-hour doc miniseries celebrating "the unsung hero" of the United States: the American farmer.

It promises to highlight "the captivating true stories of farming families with agricultural roots that trace back for generations," featuring "innovative storytelling and sweeping cinematic visuals [to reveal] how these hard working men and women form the backbone of our nation," according to CMT.

Meanwhile, *They Called Us Outlaws: Cosmic Cowboys*, *Honky Tonk Heroes* and *the Rise of Redneck Rock* is an eight-hour doc series looking at the shift in the country music scene in Nashville and in Austin in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The series is produced by Crowfly Pictures Entertainment and Filament Productions.

From Spurlock and his indie Warrior Poets, *Freedom* is a 90-minute film promising an in-depth look at "the idea of independence, and whether we're all still truly liberated in today's America."

Finally, *Urban Legend: When a Nation Went Country* is a feature-length doc delving into "the phenomenon sparked by the 1980 film *Urban Cowboy* – when country music found itself in vogue nationally for the first time in history." The film is produced by Ten100 Productions and directed by Dorsey and Stephan.

Jayson Dinsmore and Lewis Bogach serve as exec producers for CMT's News & Docs division.

Adam Benzine



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Bourdain's back for 2015 on CNN,
with a new season of
Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown.

CNN

CNN is adding series starring *Dirty Jobs*' Mike Rowe, journalist Lisa Ling and *America's Most Wanted* creator John Walsh to its primetime line-up.

The U.S. cable network has also renewed *Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown* for 2015 and 2016, and *Morgan Spurlock: Inside Man* for 2015.

The programs will air at 9 p.m. EST, the new slot for CNN's original series, CNN Films documentaries and in-house-produced docs featuring reporters such as Sanjay Gupta and Anderson Cooper.

Rowe will appear in *Somebody's Gotta Do It*, a Pilgrim Studios-produced show in which he visits American workers, or "innovators, do-gooders, entrepreneurs, collectors, fanatics – people who simply have to do it," CNN said in a statement.

Ling, who recently spent four seasons as host of the OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network series *Our America with Lisa Ling*, will host a part2 pictures-produced documentary series about unusual and bizarre subcultures across the United States.

In *The Hunt with John Walsh*, the *America's Most Wanted* creator and host will delve into ongoing criminal investigations in which the suspect is a fugitive at large. The series is produced by Zero Point Zero Production, the company behind *Parts Unknown*.

Rounding out CNN's slate of original series is *The Jesus Code* from Nutopia Productions. Using forensics, biblical archaeology and forgery, the series will explore evidence of Jesus Christ's existence. **KR**

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The dudes in returning series *Fast 'n' Loud* will be part of Discovery Channel's auto-themed 'Motor Mondays.'

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

Discovery Channel has unveiled a new Nik Wallenda live stunt special that will see the "King of the High Wire" attempt to cross the Chicago skyline untethered. The network has *Skyscraper Live* penciled in for a fall 2014 airing (see pg. 54).

It joins *Survival Live*, a 42-day series from Adjacent Productions set for later this year, that will mix pre-recorded episodes with live eliminations as eight survivalists head into the wild with only one to emerge as the victor. A new series, *#Bikerlive*, also incorporates a live, interactive component, as viewers watch three regional competitors build custom bikes and a winner is crowned live, via audience votes.

Discovery is also pooling its automotive programming in 'Motor Mondays,' in which returning series such as *Fast 'n' Loud* will be teamed up with new series including *#Bikerlive*.

Other new projects on the slate include *American Muscle*, a sports docuseries from Funny or Die featuring trainer Mike Barwis;

Edge of Alaska, following inhabitants of an "Old West" town in Alaska; *Fat 'n' Furious*, following the team at Christmas Automotive as they hunt for cars destined for the scrap heap and bring them back from the dead; *Kodiak*, which documents life on Kodiak Island; *Siberian Cut* (w/t), which follows an American attempting to start a logging business in Siberia; and *Tree People*, which looks at a group of people who live in the treetops of the American Pacific Northwest.

Natural history specials slated for 2014-2015 include *Dolphins: Spy in the Pod* which will use hidden robotic cameras to capture dolphins up-close; *Girl Gang of Talia*, which follows four tigress sisters as they hunt in the forests of central India; and the return of the 'Shark Week' strand.

Also set for the year ahead is the previously announced scripted series *The West*, produced by Sundance Productions and Stephen David Entertainment. **BW**

019



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Daryl Hall will rock some renovations in *Daryl's Restoration Over-Hall*.

HGTV/DIY

HGTV has greenlit a design competition series that will be exec produced by talk show host Ellen Degeneres.

Ellen's Design Challenge, a coproduction between Degeneres' A Very Good Production and A. Smith & Co., in association with Telepictures, is set to be a six-part series that will begin airing on the U.S. cable network in 2015.

The series is inspired by the recent Oscar host's expertise in furniture design and love of buying and renovating homes, the network said in a statement.

It will feature six contestants competing for a cash prize by sketching, designing and building "extraordinary furniture" within a 24-hour time frame. The competitors will work with expert carpenters and the designs will be evaluated by a panel of judges.

In addition, HGTV will run a six-part companion series online that will give viewers a chance to participate and get to know the designers.

DIY, meanwhile, premiered three new series in May, including *Daryl's Restoration Over-Hall*, in which Daryl Hall of pop group Hall & Oates tackles the restoration of an 18th Century home in Sherman, Connecticut; *Disaster Decks*, featuring designer and carpenter Paul

LaFrance; and *Stone Age*, which follows father and son stone experts Steve and Nick Rhule as they create ultimate yard makeovers by turning piles of rock into fabulous fixtures.

Series on tap for later this year include *The Shatner Project* in October, in which William Shatner and his wife Elizabeth embark on an enterprising mission to update their home with a bold new reno; and *Family Under Construction: Hawaii*, which debuts in July and follows a family attempting to live in a run-down Hawaii home while renovating at the same time. Two series will also premiere in August: *Sledgehammer*, in which host Jason Cameron tackles homeowners' most hated rooms in a race against time, and *First Time Flippers*, which follows novices in the home flipping game as they learn the ropes.

KR, with files from BW

INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

Discovery Communications' ID has greenlit 11 new series and renewed 22 returning series, amounting to more than 700 original hours.

Highlights include *Vanity Fair Confidential*, an hour-long series featuring crime stories taken from the pop culture and current affairs magazine; the miniseries *Heartbreakers*, in which TV heartthrobs from the 1980s and 1990s such as Kevin Sorbo and Antonio Sabato Jr. take on bad boy roles; and *Momsters: When Moms Go Bad*, a Roseanne Barr-hosted series about mothers who are not above breaking the law to help their children succeed.

Other new crime series include *Young, Hot & Crooked*; *Murder Book* (working title); *See No Evil* (w/t), *Your Worst Nightmare* (w/t), *Living a Lie* (w/t), *The Help* (w/t), *Did He Do It?* and *Twisted Tales of My 9 to 5*. **KR**



Roseanne Barr hosts *Momsters: When Moms Go Bad* for ID.



Fair-haired singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran is the focus of the premiere episode of the MTV docuseries *9 Days and Nights*.

MTV

Viacom-owned MTV has greenlit an Alaska-set reality show, an extreme dance competition and a music documentary series as part of its summer slate.

Slednecks follows a group of friends who live outdoors in the wilds of the northernmost state. The title was one of three new reality shows announced during MTV's April upfront presentation in New York City.

The other new programs are the weekly, hour-long dance competition *Beyond Dance*, which stars choreographers Rich & Tone and features dancers taking part in extreme challenges such as dancing on the side of a building or in zero gravity; and *One Bad Choice*, which "explores the consequences of young people who made a single, terrible decision that irrevocably changed their lives forever," according to MTV.

The network also set a July 10 premiere date for *Snack-Off*, a cooking competition in which amateur chefs do battle in a series of snack-inspired challenges.

On June 10, MTV will begin airing *9 Days and Nights*, a documentary series that focuses on an artist during a turning point in their career. The first 60-minute episode will feature British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran.

Returning series include Rob Dyrdek's *Ridiculousness*, the *Jersey Shore* spin-off *Snooki & JWOWW*, and *The Real World*, which will enter its 30th season. In addition, MTV2 will debut a second season of *Nick Cannon Presents: Wild 'N Out*. **KR**

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL/NAT GEO WILD

National Geographic Channel (NGC) is continuing to broaden its scope with its upcoming slate while staying true to Nat Geo's "smartertainment" mandate, says EVP of programming and strategy Heather Moran.

"I don't think you can underestimate the power of *Brain Games*," Moran tells *realscreen*. "It reinforces everything we thought about our viewer – they love really smart stuff. So the success of that show gave us more of an ability to play in this smart, fun and eccentric space."

Tigress' *Crowd Control* uses hidden cameras to see how ordinary people react to social psychology-based experiments, such as staircases that look like pianos, garbage cans that make sounds when used, and mysterious voices on elevators calling their riders "lazy" for not using the stairs.

Authentic Entertainment's *You Can't Lick Your Elbow* sees host Tony Gonzalez show viewers numerous "body hacks" designed to illustrate little-known abilities of the human body, such as being able to hold one's breath for several minutes, or seeing in the dark.

On the action/adventure tip, *Meat Heads* from Relativity Television follows chef Eric Greenspan as he explores the U.S. in search of tantalizing meat recipes. That series, and

the miniseries *Eat: The Story of Food*, see the network tackling food programming, as seen through the Nat Geo lens. The miniseries will air in conjunction with *National Geographic* magazine's year-long initiative to explore the world of food.

Another upcoming series, Eyeworks USA's *Remote Survival*, puts a new twist into the survival genre – currently enjoying a resurgence – as the participants will be guided by an outdoor survival expert via a two-way headset.

Also on tap for 2015 is the latest installment in the Bill O'Reilly *Killing...* book adaptations, *Killing Jesus* from Scott Free.

For Nat Geo Wild, the wildlife-centric channel in the Nat Geo stable, new series include *Dr. K: Exotic Pet Vet* (w/t) from Spectrum Field Productions, and the cleverly titled *Pond Stars* from Warm Springs Productions. Events include a weekend of dog-friendly programming under the 'Dogs Rule' banner, and the return of 'Big Cat Week' and 'Sharkfest'. **BW**



The hit series *Brain Games*, hosted by Jason Silva, has informed much of NGC's "smartertainment" fare.

PIVOT

The 2014-2015 slate for Participant Media-owned Pivot, which also includes several scripted series, amounts to 300 hours of original programming aimed at 18- to 34-year-olds.

Previously announced series *Human Resources* (10 x 30 minutes, formerly *TerraCycle*) will premiere on August 8. The Left/Right-produced show follows the employees of New Jersey-based start-up TerraCycle, a company that operates in 24 countries and is aiming to eliminate global waste.

Meanwhile, *Welcome To Fairfax* (10 x 30 minutes) will begin airing in October. The show is billed as being a behind-the-scenes look at a vibrant, artistic community in the Fairfax area of Los Angeles, "as seen through the eyes of some of the young visionaries who inhabit it." It is produced by Ryan Sidhoo, Ben Selkow and Todd Lubin, and Jay Peterson of Matador.

Pivot's unscripted development slate includes the Funny Or Die-produced *America's Got Issues*, a clip-based comedy show that features comedians and experts riffing on social and

cultural issues; *America Rewind*, a Stick Figure Studios-produced docuseries about the employees of an American Revolution role-playing park; and *I Am Young Detroit*, a Trium Entertainment-produced docuseries/procedural about the staff of a social venture working to combat youth unemployment.

My Favorite Things is a Snackaholic-produced series looking at the history and environmental impact of products such as blue jeans and smartphones; and *Untitled Andrew Jenks Project* is a docuseries starring the *Room 335* filmmaker.

Cesar's Last Fast, the first in a series of 10 feature documentaries to be jointly produced and/or acquired by Pivot and Hispanic network Univision, will premiere on May 24 on both channels. The Sundance doc *Marmato*, about a Colombian gold-mining village's battle with a Canadian mining giant, will air in the third quarter. **KR**

Pivot's slate covers everything from the history and environmental impact of assorted products, to clip-based comedy shows riffing on social and cultural issues.

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TLC

Female-skewing Discovery Communications net TLC is emphasizing the themes of family, relationships and weddings with 44 new and returning unscripted series amounting to 500 hours of programming for 2014-2015.

The network has unveiled the strand 'TLC's Family Reunion,' which will bring back stars of past series for new one-off specials. *Kate Plus 8* (working title) from Figure Eight Films checks in on the Gosselin clan matriarch and her sextuplets and twin teenagers. In Megalomedia's *Quints By Surprise: 5 Years Old*, the Jones family celebrates their quintuplets' fifth birthdays.

TLC will push the family theme in seven other unscripted series and specials. The Figure Eight Films one-off *A Duggar Leaves Home* follows Amy Duggar, cousin of the *19 Kids & Counting* family, as she moves to Nashville to become a country singer; *The Leah Remini Project* (working title) from Gurney Productions is a reality series starring the *King of Queens* star and her sitcom-like real-life family; *Listed Sisters* (working title) from Matador Content is a real estate show

featuring three entrepreneurial sisters; and the Shed Media US-produced special *Long Lost Family* (working title), based on the format that's been a hit in assorted territories including the UK, follows people who reunite with their loved ones after a prolonged period apart.

TwoFour Productions' *Risking It All* (working title) is about house-boaters living off the grid in physically demanding conditions; *The Speegle Life* (working title) from Ryan Seacrest Productions follows a Southern family that leaves its church in Florida to help the daughters find a new congregation in Alabama; and *Welcome to Allentown* (working title) is a special from Stiletto Television about a musical family of 10 that travels the country in a bus.

New additions to the channel's Friday night bridal block are the Half Yard-produced special *Curvy Girls Bridal* (working title), about the owners of a bridal boutique for full-figured women; and *Heidi to the Dresscue*



(working title), a Trium Entertainment-produced special about an Alabama-based custom wedding dress designer.

TLC has also renewed the relationship series *90 Day Fiancé* for a second season and greenlit new shows *Psychic Matchmaker* from Jane Street Entertainment and *The One That Got Away from Ardaban*. **KR**

TLC is bringing more to the bridal party in the year ahead, with the upcoming special *Curvy Girls Bridal*.

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It's a dirty job but someone has to do it: meet Jack Maxwell, host of *Booze Traveller*.

New series coming to Travel Channel will cover everything from RV dealerships to globetrotting booze quaffing.

TRAVEL CHANNEL

Culture-focused series being rolled out by the Scripps Networks Interactive channel include the 8 x 60-minute *Big Crazy Family Adventure* (working title), which follows explorer-writer Bruce Kirkby as he treks from Vancouver to the Himalayas with his wife and two children; 6 x 60-minute series *Hotel Amazon* (working title), on longtime friends Rusty Johnson and Stephan Jablonski, who leave New York to realize their dream of building a world-class resort in the Peruvian Amazon; the 7 x 60-minute series *World Access* (working title), in which a team of experts and journalists lead viewers through landscapes and strange tourist destinations; and the one-hour special *One Day on Earth* (working title), which shows sights and sounds in countries from all over the globe, captured all on the same day.

Travel Channel will introduce new personalities in the 6 x 30-minute series *Big Time RV* (working title), which will profile America's largest and most prestigious RV dealership in Florida; the 8 x 60-minute series *Booze Traveler* (working title), in which cocktail connoisseur Jack Maxwell will travel around the world tasting drinks; the 6 x 60-minute series *Expedition Unknown* (working title), in which traveler Josh Gates will investigate the world's iconic mysteries; the 13 x 60-minute series *Resort Rescue*, which follows hospitality consultant Shane Green as he helps hotel and resort owners figure out where they're

going wrong with their businesses; and the 6 x 30-minute series *Tours by Unger* (working title), where host Brian Unger pulls back the veil on America's hidden history.

Meanwhile, programs catering to food enthusiasts include the 13 x 60-minute series *American Grilled* (working title), which pits grill masters from various backgrounds against one another in an outdoor cooking challenge; and the 8 x 60-minute series *Underground BBQ Challenge*, where neighbors face off across the U.S. in a BBQ cooking contest.

The net has also greenlit two half-hour episodes of *1 Way Ticket* (working title), a series in development that focuses on last-minute travel planning.

Other greenlit pilots on the Travel Channel development slate, listed here with working titles, include *Adventure Capitalists* from Eyeworks USA; *Breaking Borders* from MY Tupelo Entertainment, which pairs Peabody-winning correspondent Mariana van Zeller with chef Michael Voltaggio on a tour of well-known comfort zones; *Find My Past* from Lion TV; *Guiding Alaska* from Orion Entertainment; *Metropolis* from Nutoxia; *Nigel's Last Resort*, featuring luxury resort developer Nigel Franklyn, from M2 Pictures; *Only In...* from PSG films; and *Watt's World*, featuring journalist Nick Watt, from Lincoln Square Productions.

MR, with files from BW

TRU TV

The Turner Broadcasting network is seeking to redefine its brand, and is launching six series geared towards a younger, dual-gender audience that looks to television solely for fun and surprising entertainment.

The net's upcoming slate includes the pop-culture-themed talent competition series *Fake-Off* (premiering early fall), in which teams compete with theater, acrobatics, dance, costume and illusion acts for the title of "America's *Fake-Off* champions"; reality western *Way Out West* (July), about three rival outfitter families in the Idaho back-country; and comedy series *How to Be a Grown Up* (summer 2014), which offers humorous advice and common-sense solutions to the trials of entering adulthood.

Also on the slate is docusoap *Local News* (working title; fall 2014), which follows the rivalry between news teams at two small town television stations; and ambush game show *Hair Jacked* (fall 2014), in which participants compete for big money or a haircut.

TruTV has also ordered 13 additional episodes of comic magician series *The Carbonaro Effect*, picked up a fourth season of *Impractical Jokers*, and signed on for spin-off series *Jokers Wild*!

The new shows will join the previously announced sketch comedy *Friends of the People* and design competition show *Motor City Masters*. **MR**

The network is seeking to redefine its brand, launching six series geared towards a younger, dual-gender audience.



The Marriage Bootcamp franchise takes on reality with its *Reality Stars* spin-off.

WE TV

Actor Charlie Sheen and celebrity event planner David Tutera are among the new faces on AMC Networks-owned WE tv's 2014/15 upfront slate.

Sheen will put newly engaged couples to the test in the net's Escape Reality and Estevez Sheen Productions-made one-hour pilot *Charlie Sheen's Bad Influence* – currently in production in Los Angeles – where he will challenge two partners' knowledge of one another.

Meanwhile, WE tv's new series include the Glassman Media-produced *Match Made in Heaven* (8 x 60 minutes), in which a preacher helps an eligible bachelor find a partner; the All3Media America/Studio Lambert-produced social media experiment *Mystery Millionaire* (6 x 60 minutes), in which wealthy singles go undercover as average people looking for love; and the Pilgrim Studios-made David Tutera's *CELEbrations* (8 x 60 minutes), which follows celebrity event planner Tutera as he coordinates everything from rapper Lil' Kim's baby shower to a wedding for a former cast member of *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*.

WE tv's slate boasts new series featuring preachers helping singles find partners, wealthy singles going undercover looking for love, and celeb wedding planners.

Finally, returning series include *Kendra on Top*, which comes back for a third season focusing on Kendra Wilkinson-Baskett's continued problems striking a work-life balance; *Marriage Boot Camp: Reality Stars*, which tests the relationships of TV reality stars and returns for a second season this spring; and *Tamar & Vince*, which kicks off its third season spotlighting Braxton sister Tamar and her husband-manager Vince. **MR**

ON THE SLATE: DIGITAL

The recent NewFronts in New York City brought the key players in original online content together to trumpet their accomplishments and highlight their new slates. And as with last year's event, unscripted content was abundant.

Brands with established television strongholds such as *National Geographic* magazine and Scripps Networks Interactive announced their intent to considerably ramp up their online original offerings, with Nat Geo unveiling nine web series, ranging from travel content (*I Heart My City*) to exploration-focused fare (*Explorers Project*, *Expedition Raw*). Scripps, meanwhile, is rolling out a whopping 150 new online series, utilizing its TV talent for some – the Scott brothers of *Property Brothers* fame will star in *Toddler vs. Toddler* for HGTV.com, while Reverend Run from Run DMC and *Rev. Run's Renovation* will star with his wife, Justine, in an online series for DIYnetwork.com.

Meanwhile, online platforms looking to grab eyeballs with original series and assorted MCNs also talked a good game to advertisers at the NewFronts. AOL unveiled 10 new celeb-heavy shows for its On Network, ranging from *Making a Scene with James Franco*, from Rabbit Bandini

Productions and Trium Entertainment, to *Inspired*, from NewForm, the recently established digital content shingle from Discovery Studios and Imagine Entertainment's Brian Grazer and Ron Howard.

Condé Nast Entertainment, meanwhile, announced the creation of The Scene, which will serve as its online content hub, encompassing 14 video channels and 100 new and returning shows. New series range from the foodie-friendly *Epicuriosity*, focusing on the artisanal food and wine movement in the U.S., to *Most Expensivest S****, which highlights some of the most ridiculously expensive stuff money can buy.

Time, Vice and the Wall Street Journal also spotlighted new online video initiatives, with Time talking up its own online content destination, The Daily Cut; and Vice announcing a sports channel set to premiere in June, just ahead of the FIFA World Cup.

On the MCN front, Maker Studios revealed its own content hub, Maker.tv, which will feature a new channel from Morgan Spurlock, dubbed Smartish, in addition to its other channels.

BW, with files from Melita Kuburas, Aaron Leaf and Todd Longwell •



Reverend Run of Run DMC fame teams up with his wife Justine for *Rev & Justine* on DIYnetwork.com.

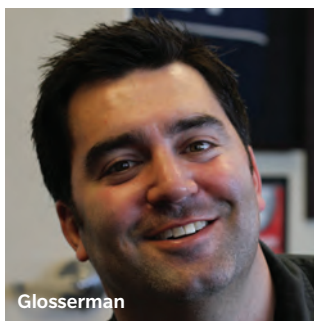


TOP talk

BY ADAM BENZINE

With two rival theatrical-on-demand providers picking up steam, doc-makers are increasingly being encouraged to ditch traditional distribution in favor of crowdsourcing an audience and releasing their films in cinemas directly.

Under the Electric Sky (above) is getting a TOD release via Tugg.



Glosserman

For years, conventional wisdom has been that if you wanted to get your documentary in American theatres, you would need to sign a deal with a major distributor.

Only with the backing of a notable player like Sony Pictures Classics, The Weinstein Company or IFC Films could a documentary really get a proper pan-U.S. release. Even then, the number of docs per year that warranted such a release were few

and far between, and those that were released rarely saw significant grosses.

But times are changing. The rise in recent months of Gathr Films and Tugg – two companies specializing

in the emerging realm of theatrical-on-demand (TOD) – is presenting a new opportunity for the creators of issue-based docs.

Using the companies' respective websites, filmmakers can crowdsource an audience to put on a film screening in almost any part of the U.S.

Potential audience members book tickets for a screening, but the screening only goes ahead (and credit cards are only charged) if a certain number of tickets are sold – thus offering a safety net for both the cinema and the filmmaker, by eliminating the risk of an empty theater.

In short: if you can prove that you've got an audience beforehand, then any film can get into a theater.

"The beauty of our model is that we're essentially optioning the cinema, and saying if we get 'x' amount of

people on Tuesday night, they'll punt, say, *Blue Jasmine* aside," explains Gathr Films founder and CEO Scott Glosserman. "The cinema may say to us, 'Gathr, anytime Monday through Thursday that you guys can cover \$325, you get a screen. Just give us six days notice.'"

Gathr's breakout documentary to date has been Richard E. Robbins' *Girl Rising*, an advocacy film which uses storytelling in a bid to get more girls across the world into classrooms.

So far, the film has brought in an impressive US\$1.73 million at the American box office, becoming the fourth highest-grossing doc of 2013. Other docs being screened via Gathr have included Sundance winners *Who is Dayani Cristal?* and *Return to Homs*.

Meanwhile, rival service Tugg has hosted festival hits such as Andrew

Girl Rising is one of Gathr Films' first major success stories.

Rossi's *Ivory Tower*, Lucy Walker's *The Crash Reel*, Sarah McCarthy's *The Dark Matter of Love* and Freida Mock's *Anita*.

On May 29, Tugg launched *Under the Electric Sky* – a 3D feature documentary looking at the electronic dance music scene, directed by Magical Elves founders Dan Cutforth and Jane Lipsitz – and at press time, has already sold out its opening night screening in LA.

Part of the appeal of the two companies is that they cater to different tiers of documentary films. For the bigger docs (such as *Dayani Cristal* and *The Crash Reel*) which already have distribution deals or have already had a preliminary theatrical run, the TOD services provide an opportunity to reach a broader audience in markets that the initial theatrical distributor had perhaps passed over.

But the services also work for smaller docs that distributors and festivals have passed on. Glosserman cites the success Gathr has had with Greg Williams' little-known documentary *The Anonymous People*, which looks at substance abuse addiction and recovery.

"The filmmaker really didn't expect to sell more than a few hundred DVDs," he recalls. "It never had a festival screening or a theatrical profile. But he was getting screening requests. So we were introduced to the film and started working with the filmmaker, and he alone was able to generate close to \$300,000 in box office for that film over about six months."

Indeed, the films that tend to work best on TOD services are docs that can galvanize a particular community that is passionate about an issue or cause. Glosserman says that Gathr averages about 150 people per screening for its docs (*Girl Rising*, which is still screening theatrically after more than a year, is averaging 175), and adds that the average tipping threshold – the point at which a screening becomes viable and will



go ahead – is the sale of about 65 tickets.

The company takes 25% of ticket sales, and filmmakers deliver their DCP master and/or Blu-Ray master, trailer, digital assets and other deliverables to Gathr just as if it were a distributor. Once a film has been registered on a site, screenings can be set up either by the filmmaker or by 'movie captains,' who campaign for screenings in their local towns.

The success of TOD is starting to draw significant attention. In one of the highest profile cases to date, doc-maker Sebastian Junger in April announced plans to launch *Korengal* – his follow-up to Oscar-nominated Afghan war doc *Restrepo* – on



his own, without the aid of a distributor.

Junger, alongside his late *Restrepo* co-director Tim Hetherington, built up a notable fan base and mailing list during the film's initial release in 2010, much of which comprised soldiers and veterans. If he and his partners at New York-based indie Goldcrest could convince that audience to come to screenings of the film's sequel in large numbers, Junger reckoned, then why would he need a middle man?

"We didn't want to lose editorial control, and we also felt like things were shifting," he says. "Filmmakers are starting to have a chance to really make money on their work, rather than

have most of it go to a distributor."

Junger says he was inspired in part by "the Louis C.K. model" of self-distribution, which saw the comedian shaking up the comedy world by eschewing a traditional network deal in favor of streaming his self-produced stand-up comedy special, *Louis C.K. – Live at the Beacon Theater*, on his own website for \$5 – a strategy which netted him a reported \$1 million.

"He just bypassed the whole power structure in media, which is pretty amazing, so that's what we're going to try and do," Junger says. "Documentaries don't get the opportunity to do that that often, but I think that we can because we have an enormous fan base from *Restrepo*. So we're in a great position to leverage that."

The first step for *Korengal* was a crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter, in a bid to raise funds to help with the release and also sell tickets directly. The campaign easily made its \$75,000 target in less than three days, and with 15 days to go at press time, has raised more than \$102,000 from more than 1,870 individual backers.

Looking to the future, Glosserman predicts that more and more big filmmakers will take the route that Junger has, just as the music industry has seen a raft of established musicians turning their back on record labels and self-releasing their music.

"We have created tools that allow filmmakers to truly sink or swim," he says. "We hope that we've created a meritocracy and that we have democratized theatrical distribution."

“In docs we trust”

International doc conference and market Sunny Side of the Doc celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, with a new edition in La Rochelle, France, from June 23-26. Here, Sunny Side founder Yves Jeanneau discusses the evolution of both the event and the documentary industry itself over the last quarter-century. **BY BARRY WALSH**

Are there specific areas of focus for the 25th edition of Sunny Side of the Doc (SSD) that you can tell us about?

Twenty-five years on, I think Sunny Side is now what it was originally designed to be: a properly international documentary marketplace. Professionals come from all continents. Many from France and all over Europe of course, but after Latin America and Asia, now Africa is knocking at the door. This year we'll welcome a big South African delegation as well as one from Morocco. I think this is really the result we wanted for the 25th SSD. These new players, new buyers, new platforms are the future of the genre; they give everyone hope and opportunities for sales and coproduction.

Secondly, the multi-platform Sunny Lab is now more upfront and integrated into the main market. For five years, we've been introducing new media /transmedia/ interactive projects and new digital platforms. The pioneers came to share their experiences, expertise and research. Today we're no longer at that stage. This area will be the second phase of SSD, concentrating on all the new ways of writing, producing and distributing. I call them clever content formats.

Last but not least, we'll keep pushing our main focus: specialist factual international coproduction. This is the main area in which ambitious projects can be developed and financed. Over the past five years, it's clear that it's no longer just a specialty of British producers. Now producers from many countries have the experience and creativity in science and history programming.

What have been some of the key challenges you've faced over the 25-year history of the conference, in terms of maintaining relevance in an increasingly crowded marketplace for events?

When we started, as a coproduction rendezvous, the doc market had hardly begun. Few films were going elsewhere than to their own domestic markets, and most of the production was done in-house by public broadcasters. Then ARTE, Canal+ and Channel 4's work

with indies really began to build the sector. I think things really changed for us from 2000 as documentary films began to win more slots on European channels, including primetime ones, particularly with the emergence of drama-docs and specials. On this wave, Sunny Side expanded, extended its borders to more and more countries and players. And it wasn't easy, as many were announcing,

year after year, the death of the genre: it was "not commercial enough", "old fashioned", "takes too long to produce"...

Then we moved from Marseille to La Rochelle in order to offer better facilities and to welcome more delegates. In 2009, I began the strategy of looking beyond Europe to the markets of Asia [Asian Side of the Doc] and Latin America [Latin Side of the Doc]. The European market had experienced a sharp downturn, and we needed to see where the new energy could come from. The doc market was becoming global, with new and strong interest for docs from continents where it's a new genre. And we added the Sunny Lab, recognizing that the market had become multi-screen with new digital channels, Internet platforms, VOD, IPTV, and apps.

We've had, through this now long story, to convince all the players and it took time and a lot of effort. In the first place, broadcasters were reluctant. Then producers became tired. Distributors had to face the economic crisis and public broadcaster budgets were cut. But we've remained confident in the way documentary makers and producers can adapt and find new areas for growth. The key point for understanding why Sunny Side is not dead but growing and extending its influence is very simple: we never changed our strategy. We just kept on going



Jeanneau

to defend and support the documentary genre. In docs we trust, as I say.

As someone who's been in the trenches of the international documentary industry for the last few decades, what do you think the biggest challenges facing doc-makers are now? And what are the biggest opportunities?

The documentary genre has always been dealing with "clever content." It's not the easiest path to choose if you're a commercial broadcaster. But more and more, I think these programs will be needed by larger and better-educated audiences who are curious and open to the globalized world. Doc makers themselves need to adapt mainly to new consumer habits, and to try and get more attention from young people.

Public broadcasters have to define their new missions and tools, and commercial ones will have to take care of their image and social utility. The doc community has to be the one to come up with successful ideas for these channels to finance.

How would you like the event to grow in the next 25 years?

Mon dieu! I've been managing SSD for 25 years. I can see where to go, and where not to go... for the next five years at least. But, as always, we'll have to adapt to the new reality, and who knows what it will be by then. We'll have to be pragmatic. But I do bet on the social usefulness of what we do. I do trust in docs. I do think that new talents will come up from Vietnam, Peru or Palestine, with stories and storytelling we haven't thought of yet. •

Risque Reality

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

Stars of today's social experiment series are stripping down, hooking up and embracing vulnerability (and each other) in a bid to bring authenticity back to unscripted. Will it work?

Discovery Channel's *Naked and Afraid* pairs intrepid and unclothed survivalists in male/female teams and places them in remote locations.



More than two decades after *The Real World* introduced TV viewers to the idea of strangers living in a house together, unscripted producers have built many more houses for many more strangers.

Considered the forerunner to many subsequent reality hits including *Big Brother* and *America's Next Top Model*, the show is MTV's longest-running reality show and was recently greenlit for a 30th season.

Since its debut, unscripted producers have tweaked the variables in so-called social experiments to find out what happens when friendships, marriages and familial bonds must contend with an artificial situation.

Of course, as unscripted programming evolved, other trends emerged: docusoaps such as *The Real Housewives*, transactional shows such as *Pawn Stars* and docucomedies like *Duck Dynasty*.

But judging from the social experiment titles rolling out on networks across the United States and Europe, the industry is looking back in order to move forward.

Fox's recently appointed executive vice president of alternative entertainment, Simon Andreae, has greenlit the reported US\$50 million social experiment *Utopia* from *Big Brother* creator John de Mol as well as *Couples Retreat*, a swingers series with shades of *Temptation Island*.

Meanwhile, the summer upfront slates for cable networks Syfy, A&E, Bravo, MTV, VH1 and WE tv are peppered with social experiment projects.

"Reality TV has gone down a path of being more heavily produced and the audience is having a tough time with the authenticity on those overly produced shows," explains Rob LaPlante, EVP at Lighthearted Entertainment. "Seeing a bunch of women scream at each other and tip over a table isn't really loud anymore because there are dozens of shows with that happening."

LaPlante, who started his TV career as a casting director on *The Real World*, is producing two social experiments: season two of *Are You The One?* for MTV and the new *Dating Naked* for VH1.

On *Are You The One?*, 20 young singles living in a house in Hawaii undertake a series of challenges to determine which of their peers is their "perfect match" to win prize money. The matches were made prior to the shoot through compatibility testing and consultations with matchmaking experts, as well as interviews with friends, family and exes.

The concept behind *Dating Naked* is simpler: cameras follow couples who – having apparently exhausted all other dating options – agree to go on blind dates in the buff.

Both series exemplify the trend of welding social experiments on to other unscripted genres, such as the dating show, the docusoap and the talk show – much like how Discovery Channel's hit *Naked and Afraid* put a social experiment spin on the survival genre.

"The key now is to find a new way of doing



The female cast of MTV's *Are You The One?*, which places 20 young singles in a house in Hawaii to find their "perfect matches."

things," says LaPlante. "How do you create a show where a bunch of single people live in a house in a way we haven't seen before? The key to selling that show was the game element."

Whereas a docuseries begins with characters and casting, social experiments are born in the development room. The overarching parameters are ultimately what should foster the drama rather than interventions by producers.

Dating Naked was one such idea. The format features a primary dater going on naked dates with several suitors and then choosing one at the end.

The primary daters will be single women who are unlucky in love and looking for the vulnerability and honesty that the nudity angle offers.

"Naked is the new loud," says LaPlante. "There is literally nowhere to hide. You're in your most vulnerable state and therefore what a brilliant way to start dating someone."

The nudity parade kicked off with *Naked and Afraid*, which premiered in June 2013. Each episode follows a man and woman who meet for the first time and must survive in the wilderness – naked – for 21 days. Now in its second season, the show averaged 2.14 million total viewers this past April.

The naked angle adds an extra layer of difficulty to the casting for Discovery and producers at Renegade 83 Entertainment. The cast members must not only be in good physical shape and committed, but also willing to put themselves in a vulnerable position.

During the shoot, a bare-bones crew comprised of a camera person, sound person and a producer are instructed not to interfere with the cast except in the

case of an emergency. The chosen location has already been deemed 'survivable' – i.e. the environment must have a temperate climate, contain food sources, drinkable water, means of building shelter and starting fire – in order to minimize medical issues.

The key to the show's success is not the nudity per se, but the way it affects the team's relationship.

"Our research shows a dual audience is coming to *Naked and Afraid*," says Luis Silberwasser, former EVP and chief content officer for Discovery Networks International. "It's that whole thing about Mars and Venus – the stereotypes of how men and women behave and how their instincts are different. It has less to do with survival and more with relationships."

For example, producers were surprised at how tough the female contestants have proven. The male contestants are lean and strong with very little body fat and without a high-caloric protein diet, their bodies consume muscle quickly. Women, on the other hand, have a higher percentage of fat than men.

"My view on this is that it's a physical thing as well as a mental thing," says Renegade 83 executive producer Steve Rankin. "Even a woman who is very slender has fat reserves she can call on that enables her to physically get through the challenge better than some of the guys do. We were expecting some differences in the physiological changes but the dramatic contrast took us by surprise."

Although both *Naked and Afraid* and *Dating Naked* hook viewers with the promise of nudity, it's the vulnerability of the situation that keeps them viewing.

"A good social experiment potentially gives you an answer to a fundamental question that human beings want to know the answer to," says LaPlante. "If dating was taken down to the most fundamentally vulnerable place possible, could it work better?"

NBCUniversal-owned cable network Bravo will ask such a question when *Friends or Lovers?* debuts this summer. Produced by World of Wonder, the docuseries follows three sets of friends who decide to take their relationships to the next level.

The idea arose during a development brainstorm session last summer, after a Bravo staffer who was frustrated with the Los Angeles dating scene decided to consult her personal black book for a possible solution.

The development team found the idea relatable – after all, many people have a friend in their lives who is their 'What if?' – and easy to grasp.

"Gone are the days of, 'Here are six friends! We hope you like 'em!'" explains Lara Spotts, Bravo's head of development. "You're seeing the social experiment trend again because ideas need to be

loud enough to cut through the clutter.

"It's almost pre-sold," she adds. "It almost doesn't even matter who your cast is because you're buying into the concept before you get to know them on the show."

Programs that hinge on deeply personal relationships can incur a backlash, but Spotts is not worried about *Friends or Lovers?* because the couples on the show are genuine in their intent.

"The casting for this was one of the most fun processes I've had in a long time. You can really tell which sets of friends have couple chemistry," she says. "In some cases, it is cringe-worthily obvious which one has had the crush but totally downplays it."

By contrast, the creators of social experiment format *Married at First Sight* at Red Arrow Entertainment Group-owned Snowman Productions went to great lengths to stave off cries of exploitation ahead of the series' premiere on Danish pubcaster DR3 last year.

The show follows three couples who undergo a match-making process overseen by

psychologists, anthropologists and theologians and then meet their partners for the first time at the altar. Cameras follow the relationships for six weeks at which point the couples can choose to divorce or stay together.

Danish TV critics initially branded the concept as a new low for television but the series was a game-changer for DR3. Ratings were a whopping 495% above slot average and three weeks after Red Arrow International brought the format to MIPCOM in Cannes last fall the distributor had closed 15 straight-to-series deals.

Nine versions of the show are in production in markets including Germany, France, Benelux, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, where A&E is adapting the format with Red Arrow-owned Kinetic Content.

"I've never experienced a sales success like this since I started working in television," says Red Arrow managing director Henrik Pabst. "This program was so strong that we weren't accepting option deals because we knew it will work as long as it goes along legal borders in certain territories."

"You're seeing the social experiment trend again because ideas need to be loud enough to cut through the clutter."

031

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As with *Friends or Lovers?* the people who sign up to get married at first sight are singles who are tired of the dating grind and intrigued by the concept, which in this case, challenges the idea that marriage should come later in a relationship, not as a starting point.

In the first episode of the Danish version, viewers followed the seven-day casting process in clinical detail as the matchmaking experts met and interviewed each contestant. Once the three couples were paired up, they took the plunge on episode two at a blind ceremony attended by family and friends.

If cast members feel exploited during the matchmaking process, they are able to say “I

don’t” at the end of the seven days.

“We legally marry them and that comes with repercussions, ramifications and with legal problems. If you want to be responsible to that as a producer you need to find the right people,” says Red Arrow Entertainment Group’s managing director for creative operations Michael Schmidt. “We are not promising a loud, wild, crazy experiment with naked people and a lot of sex on the wedding night. That’s the opposite of what the show is.”

Once the couples say “I do,” producers give them space to develop a relationship. They are not filmed 24/7 like the cast of *Naked and Afraid*.

“If we are interested in taking this seriously, we need to give them privacy,” says Schmidt. “It’s not like another format that says it’s a social experiment but really it’s casting with a nice, loud twist. The social experiment is at the core of the format.”

The twist on WE tv’s upcoming *Sex Box* pilot, meanwhile, is as loud as they come.

Based on a one-off special that aired on Channel 4 in the UK last fall, the show asks three couples to have sex in a soundproof box on a studio stage and then talk about the encounter immediately afterwards with a panel of experts in front of a live audience.

Part talk show, part relationship show, part social experiment, *Sex Box* attracted an average audience of 1.2 million viewers when it aired on Channel 4. *Catfish* producer Relativity Television snapped up the U.S. rights and sold the format to female-skewing cable net WE tv, where Relativity Television CEO Tom Forman believes it has a greater chance of being a hit than

on a more general interest network.

“I’m sure people are going to go completely nuts because it’s certainly the most outrageous log line of all time,” says Forman. “But it’s rooted in real research and science. People are genuinely more

open, honest and forthcoming about their sexual experience if you can talk to them right after they’ve had sex.”

Relativity has put out a national casting call for the show. Casting directors in 11 U.S. cities are on the lookout for couples experiencing problems in the bedroom. Whereas the UK version featured average couples discussing sex, the U.S. version will zero in on specific issues.

“In a social experiment you’re typically looking for people who don’t present as different or outrageous,” says Forman. “You’re looking for regular people who may have interesting problems and circumstances but who are very much like the viewer.”

The U.S. version will drop the presenter and speed up the pacing, but one thing that will not change is the sex box itself, which viewers never see inside.

“One of the places the British version gets it exactly right is in treating the sex box itself as a sacred space – and I realize as I say that that it sounds kind of absurd,” says Forman.

“If this is going to work and people are going to feel comfortable and thus open up to us, the inside of the sex box has to be awesome,” he adds. “We’re going to make it awesome – and air conditioned.”

Sex Box, *Married at First Sight*, *Friends or Lovers?*, *Dating Naked* and Fox’s *Utopia* have yet to air but producers and network execs are confident the unscripted television world’s focus will have shifted to social experiments come the fall.

Red Arrow’s Henrik Pabst will have three new social experiments – including a commission to announce – at MIPCOM in October.

“You walk in and talk to network executives and they’ll look you in the eye and tell you they’re interested in social experiments. I don’t think it’s a secret that it’s the next big trend,” says Forman.

“You’ve beaten performance to death. You’ve beaten adventure to death. To an extent it’s time to find something new and promptly beat that to death too.” ●



‘Til death do us part, or at least until the end of the week: *Married at First Sight*



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Winner: **John Smith**

FROM KINDLE TO EMBER

Let the Fire Burn documents the deadly standoff between police and radical group MOVE.

University professor-turned-filmmaker Jason Osder spent more than 10 years making *Let the Fire Burn*, a documentary examining a controversial 1985 clash between police in Philadelphia and a radical black liberation group. Here, he talks to *realscreen* about the legal and technical challenges involved in making his all-archival debut. BY ADAM BENZINE

For many documentary makers working with archival material, the challenge is in restoring the footage to make it look as good as possible.

And while this was true for *Let the Fire Burn*, the debut documentary from Washington DC-based Jason Osder, the filmmaker also found himself heading in the opposite direction, roughing up footage by adding visual noise and artificial deterioration, in a bid to give the film a uniform and time period-appropriate look.

The doc focuses on the events surrounding a 1985 stand-off between the Philadelphia Police Department and MOVE, a radical, back-to-nature, black liberation group.

At the film's core is a violent clash that took place on May 13 of that year, which saw Philadelphia officials dropping an incendiary bomb on MOVE's headquarters and making a decision to "let the fire burn," resulting in the destruction of some 60 homes in the city and the deaths of 11 people, including five children.

The doc is comprised entirely of archival footage, consisting of news clips, interviews conducted at the time, and footage from a post-disaster investigative committee hearing.

Osder, who is an assistant professor at George Washington University's (GWU) School of Media and Public Affairs, remembers news coverage of the incident from his childhood. "It always kind of stuck with me and bothered me," he says.

The filmmaker found the majority of the archival

material used in the film housed at Temple University of Philadelphia's Urban Archives division, but gaining access was no small feat. Osder said it took time to earn the trust of the staff working there, and over the course of years spent researching the material, "eventually I had been looking at the stuff longer than anyone who's been working there on staff."

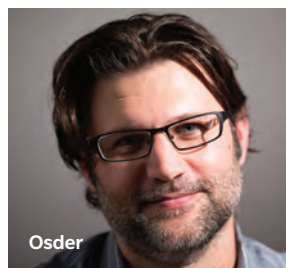
In all, the Archives housed about 80 to 100 hours of material – "not that bad by documentary standards," he offers. In addition, all of the footage of the hearings had already been transcribed.

"They were actually transcribed on a typewriter," he says. "We scanned them all in and did optical character recognition (OCR), so they were searchable by keyword for the first time."

The film aired on PBS in May after winning acclaim on the festival circuit last year, but it took Osder more than a decade to make. He raised financing for it piecemeal, and compares the process of making an indie doc to "making a teepee – you lean the sticks together and hope it kind of holds."

The director received an initial US\$20,000 grant from GWU and a \$30,000 grant from the Sundance Institute, as well as a Garrett Scott Documentary Development Grant from the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival.

He also pitched the doc at the Hot Docs Forum in



Toronto and the Realscreen Summit in Washington DC, winning the 2010 edition of the So You Think You Can Pitch? competition at the latter. He also got "a lot of in-kind work" and invested his own money into the project.

Beyond financing, another challenge came in tackling "a knot of licensing, fair use and

clearance issues" surrounding the archival footage housed at the Urban Archives. Osder explains that the post-bombing hearings were akin to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but were not actual legal proceedings.

This meant that the copyright status of video of the hearings – and of the news footage subpoenaed by the commission – existed in an uncertain legal space.

"The commission was an extra-legal body – it's not a court of law – so there's very little precedent in the U.S.," he says. "It was a one-off thing designed to deal with an issue in an ethical and moral way. If they'd been a court of law and they'd subpoenaed that footage, it would've passed into the public domain unequivocally."

"But because they're not a court of law, it was a very gray area. And the other thing is, the commission doesn't exist anymore, so who do you even talk to? Plus, they had ceded [the footage] to a university, and the contract between the university and the commission was very

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The plain truth

William Karel has helmed docs about world leaders, political movements and secret wars. But with his latest project, *Annihilation: The Destruction of Europe's Jews*, he aims to bring simplicity and clarity to the darkest of topics.

BY BARRY WALSH



Director William Karel has carved out a lengthy career, chronicling the intersection between politics, history and the human condition. Subjects have included American presidents (*The World According to Bush*, *The Men of the White House*) and French leaders (*Looking for Nicolas Sarkozy*); and flash points that changed history (1929, the lunar landing “mockumentary” *Dark Side of the Moon*).

For his next major project, the ambitious eight-part *Annihilation: The Destruction of Europe's Jews*, Karel and co-director Blanche Finger aim to bring a new perspective to an important if horrible part of history, and attempt to answer the question: how was the Shoah – the mass murder of European Jews – possible? In addition to interviews and commentary from renowned historians, newly discovered and rare archive materials will be used to bring the project, currently in production and making the rounds in the documentary funding forum circuit, to life.

“It might seem arrogant to take on the monument of 20th century history that is the destruction of Europe's Jews,” says Karel. “What could we bring to the subject that was new? What new documents, what new archives, what new interpretations would we be able to present?”

“When we were approached by Paul Rozenberg [producer at Zadig Productions], our first reaction was to put up these same arguments,” he adds. “But in the course of our research and our interviews, a completely different aspect emerged to us: like everyone, we thought we ‘knew all about it,’ when in fact, no, we knew very little.”

With January 2015 marking the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the camps in Auschwitz, commemorative programming will no doubt come to myriad international network schedules. For *Annihilation*, France Télévisions has signed on as a partner, with an aim towards airing it in primetime on France 2. Keeping a broad, primetime audience in mind, the filmmakers are taking steps to ensure that each episode of the project covers a particular period in a self-

contained manner – with the first film tracing Hitler's arrival to power up to the start of the invasion of Poland, the second exploring the Polish ghettos, and other installments covering various Nazi operations and ultimately, the war crime trials.

“We tried to structure it by theme, but that didn't work, so in the end, the best possible solution was chronologically,” says Karel. “The main difficulty involved the sheer mass of archive photos, videos and rushes we had to handle.”

After meeting with close to 50 historians, the team ended up with “hundreds of hours of interviews, and almost 400 hours of archive footage and 6,000 photographs.” Over the course of research, some extremely rare archives were uncovered, featuring such scenes as the deportation of German Jews to France in 1940; an American amateur film, shot in color, depicting the Warsaw ghetto in 1939; and several amateur color films shot by Nazi soldiers in Poland and the then-USSR.

The question of how to use certain archive material, given that much of it was propaganda-based content, arose. The directors opted to often retain the original commentary in the clips, “to not mislead the spectator about the fact that it's a propaganda image.”

As well, national and regional archives, both public and private, from around the world were consulted, in the U.S., Israel, and assorted European territories. In all, those 400 hours of archive stem from 30 countries, including thousands of Soviet-era archives and documents released in the Nineties but rarely shown or analyzed.

“It was a question here of taking the time in the film to let the archives speak, to give them the space and their due importance as a source,” says Karel. “The editing thus brings together archives about the same events, but of a very different nature and therefore filmed totally differently.”

“The archives shown are sometimes analyzed by contributors in the film, which gives the viewer the handle he or she needs to understand these images.”

In addition, Karel says that while “we will



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work on the color grading to ensure the images are the best possible quality when put in HD," colorization will not be used, with the team intending to have the stark truths contained within the footage – both visually and aurally – intact.

"Notably, thanks to the Spielberg Center [at the USC Shoah Foundation], we have obtained original sounds and recreated soundtracks for the archives of the period, especially sounds of the time from the ghetto," he says. "So we'll be able to overlay the archives with original sounds in order to recreate a soundtrack which is as close as possible to the reality."

While many great works about the Holocaust and the Shoah have moved audiences over the years, with Claude Lanzmann's work perhaps chief among them in terms of depth, both Karel and Finger, who also teamed up to co-direct 2011's *Album(s) d'Auschwitz*, maintain that *Annihilation* is a work for future generations, intended to present the

unfathomable in a simple, clear context, and to combat what some historians refer to as "Shoah fatigue."

"'Didactic' is not an insult. The film will be didactic, that's for sure," argues

"It was a question of taking the time in the film to let the archives speak, to give them their due importance as a source."

Karel. "Our approach is both filmic and educational. We wanted to produce a program that is extremely accessible, and which could speak to every generation: to older people, who think they know about this subject, and to younger ones, for whom the duty of memory and transmission seems an absolute necessity to us.

"The film will be simple without being

simplistic," he continues. "We have made sure that the historians speak plainly and clearly. They address us as an everyman audience. We won't use any narration and it will be the intercut accounts of the historians that will carry the film. The historians recount history and will bounce off one another. They provide the film's narrative thread."

With the film slated as one of the projects to be presented during Sheffield Doc/Fest's MeetMarket event (along with new films from such doc directors as Stanley Nelson and Franny Armstrong), work continues to bring more partners, and more territories, to the table (Paris-based ZED is handling

distribution). Karel, for his part, counts *Annihilation* as the most ambitious project that he's worked on thus far, both in terms of its subject matter, and its length.

"The hard part," he adds, "will be making other films afterwards."

038 generations, intended to present the



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◀ continued from page 035

strange – I had a lot of lawyers look at it over the years.”

Nevertheless, Osder and his editor Nels Bangarter sensed there was gold to be found in those commission hearings, which the director describes as being “dramatic and iconic, and almost Shakespearean.”

It was Bangarter who helped convince Osder that he should consider scrapping the handful of talking head interviews that had already been shot, and instead embrace an all-archival approach.

And while there have been hit docs released in recent years that have taken similar routes – such as *Senna*, *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*, *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu* and *Our Nixon* – at the time that the filmmakers were making the doc, there was little in the way of precedent for such a film.

Bangarter “looked at everything together and he helped me see both the limitations of the interviews, and more importantly, the potential to do something really special with the hearings,” Osder recalls.

“I give full credit to him, but I also think that is the job of the editor: to see it early and see it new. I’d like

to see editors get more credit – a good documentary is synonymous with a well-edited documentary.”

Fortunately, GWU was able to support Osder with a team of legal fellows: young lawyers who come to the university straight out of law school, seeking interesting legal projects. The filmmaker also employed California-based indie film specialists Donaldson + Callif to help clear material.

In addition to the legal and copyright challenges, the other key hurdle Osder faced in making *Let the Fire Burn* was in the quality of the 25-year-old archival material.

Though the film uses footage from a variety of sources – including one-inch VTR, VHS and VHS LP – Osder and Bangarter figured that if they could make the footage seem consistent throughout, the audience would be less likely to take note of the overall quality. As such, they took a number of small, unusual steps to actually add noise and decrease the quality of some of their footage.

“Some of the footage is quite distressed and quite low resolution. What we realized was that you’re going to notice that quite early on, but if we never cut to the high-def interview, you’re never going to be reminded – you’ll

Over the 10 years spent on the film, director Jason Osder and editor Nels Bangarter decided to eschew talking heads for an all-archive approach.

get used to it,” Osder explains.

“If you look closely, there are a couple of places where at times there are jump cuts covered by fake vertical rolls or fake tape hits,” he reveals. “Sometimes we were just straight up cheating, but sometimes it was because the footage we worked with in the editing room had the vertical roll, making it permissible to cut it that way, and then when we replaced it, we just had to rough it up again to make it look good.”

The unusual approach appears to have paid off. Among its honors to date, the film won awards from the Tribeca Film Festival and the International Documentary Association for editing, as well as the Independent Spirit Awards’ Truer than Fiction prize.

“Every film has its own language,” Osder reflects, “and you have to learn how far you can take it.” •

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KNOW YOUR COMPOSER

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

The wide range of genres within unscripted programming requires similar scope when it comes to music scoring. Here, *realscreen* knocks on the studio door and finds out more about the composers behind the cues, and the processes involved in making reality rock.



Joel Beckerman

Man Made Music • www.manmademusic.com

How is the idea of sonic branding evolving as programming goes multi-platform?

About a year and a half ago I produced the horn arrangements for will.i.am's *Entertainment Tonight* theme. Part of that assignment was to come up with a little button that worked for broadcast but was much more about, what does the show sound like when you hit a button on the iPad? The intersection between long-form storytelling, scoring and looking for what I call brand navigation sounds is becoming more organic.

What's your approach to scoring for digital?

My approach is to draw from materials you already have. Normally you have to rethink it but I focus on making sure the experience is cohesive.

You might create a sound that is simple or that gives you feedback: you hit a button and know you've accomplished something. Scoring an iPad experience is similar to scoring a television show but it's more about providing this elegant simplicity that serves whatever the user is experiencing at that moment.

I think of it almost like a print designer: I have to have a lot of silence because that's my white space. I need a lot of white space to make the sonic moments meaningful. It's really easy to annoy people in digital. It's the cayenne pepper – a little

bit can make a huge difference and too much spoils the sauce.

What trends are you hearing in unscripted music these days?

We're using more live musicians and real sounds and doing a lot more recording. It's a little challenging since we know budgets are not increasing on factual shows so we have to be really crafty and smart about what we record and the way we record it. The overall feeling is that musicians add a greater sense of authenticity. It's breaking those conventions of going to samples that have grown up over the past 10 years. Now we're coming up with ways to hear the wonderful imperfection in instrumentalists.

Notable credits

30 for 30 (ESPN), *Paranormal Witness* (Syfy), *Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations* (Travel Channel), *Meet The Press* (NBC), *Gangland* (History), *CBS This Morning* (CBS).

Other activities

A proponent of 'sonic branding,' Beckerman has created sonic identities for HBO, Showtime and AT&T. He reworked the NBC *Nightly News* theme with composer John Williams and worked on horn arrangements for will.i.am's remix of the *Entertainment Tonight* theme song.



Craig Sharmat

Warner Chappell Production Music (freelance)

www.warnerchappellpm.com

You have a reputation for scoring crime shows.

How did that happen?

I worked on *America's Most Wanted* and when they went to library music, they allowed me to keep my publishing and we continued working that way for 12 years. I created a library of crime music that started to grow and became sizable [he now operates the library ScoreDog Music, in addition to working as a frequent

freelancer for Warner Chappell Production Music]. When new shows couldn't afford an original score but wanted custom cues, I could fill it in with that library.

What's the weirdest unscripted project you've worked on?

Probably one I didn't watch: *Strange Sex*. I'm just not adventurous that way so I wasn't interested to see what these people were doing. The producers would go to the library and just say, "Can you create this?" It might be an old Bryan Ferry cue like "Slave to Love"

and then the show ended up being about bondage.

Can you tell me about your career as a jazz musician?

I've had three top 10 *Billboard* hits in the last few years. A lot of guys have used their rock notoriety to get into TV scoring but I went the other way. I was a scorer first and I then went into smooth jazz, although I toured with smooth jazz acts before becoming a TV scorer. Regular jazz has swing and Latin feels but nothing grooves with an R&B feel and allows you to have a jazz sensibility like smooth jazz. It's got a bad moniker because of that. That being said, there are players out there who can be considered substandard but there are other players who are just spectacular. There's good and bad in everything.

Notable credits

The Real Housewives of New Jersey (Bravo); *Deadly Affairs*, *Southern Friend* *Homicide*, *Who the Bleep Did I Marry* (Investigation Discovery); *America's Most Wanted* (Fox)

Other activities

Operates library ScoreDog Music.

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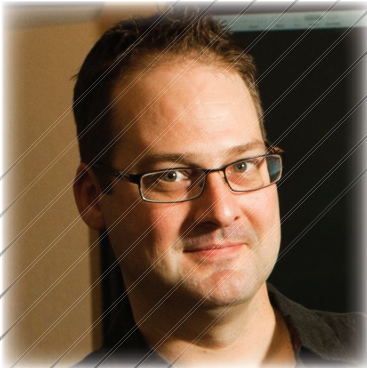
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Brandon Thompson

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When do you decide to use live musicians versus digital/electronic sounds when composing?

It's always been about working with incredibly talented composers who are also musicians. We will record on our own tracks, but also collaborate closely with others. So if I need a solo string performance on a track I'm working on I can send it over to one of our composers who plays cello (or, if they're a better fit for the assignment, then I just let them compose it). But we're pretty picky about things sounding authentic so it's important for us to be able to have a diverse team of composers and musicians to accommodate the variety of projects we work on.

What was a particularly challenging or interesting unscripted project you worked on?

Taking On Tyson for Animal Planet definitely comes to mind. Two composers had been let go before we got the call, and this was towards the very end of the post schedule. They had temped all the episodes with soundtracks so we had to scramble to replace

everything in each episode as fast as possible. The other kicker was the production company and post house were located in London so we were essentially behind on post every day. I remember one specific morning where I was at home meeting with some construction people and I got a call from the studio. The production team had a note on one of my cues, but no one had checked it until they were on the dub stage. It was night there and they all wanted to go home so I rushed to the studio, opened the cue, made the changes, and sent it back to London so they could finish the mix and go home. That was just the start of my work day.

Do you make music outside of your job?

I'm fortunate enough to have a job that allows me to fulfill so many of my creative needs. I am able to score to picture, work with producers who are willing to take creative chances, and work with other composers and musicians from so many backgrounds which leaves me very fulfilled at the end of the day. •

Notable credits

Big Brother (CBS), *Wipeout* (ABC),
Whale Wars (Animal Planet), *Off
Their Rockers with Betty White*
(NBC), *Ghost Hunters* (Syfy), *Beyond
Scared Straight* (A&E).

Other activities

Worked as a music editor on the
ABC soap opera *One Life to Live*.

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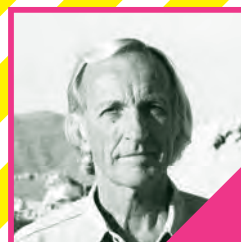


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HISPANIC UNSCRIPTED FOCUS

Texas Cl

DEALING IN DIVERSITY

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

As more networks emerge to cater to the growing U.S. Hispanic television market, there's a need for more unscripted content that reflects its bicultural reality, as well as Spanish-language programming that adds its own flavor to the general market's reality genres.

Texas Trocas, Discovery en Español's first docureality series, launches this fall.

When John Fogelman, co-founder of U.S. network El Rey, flips through television channels, the programming he encounters doesn't reflect the 53 million-strong Hispanic population in the U.S. Both scripted and unscripted shows in the general market rarely cast Hispanic actors, tackle their socioeconomic realities or reflect Latino culture. He says it's a troubling lack of representation, considering the group is expected to comprise 31% of the population by 2060.

This void in programming was the impetus behind the creation of Latino-targeting El Rey, which was launched in January by Comcast through its deal to start 10 independently-owned channels as part of its merger with NBCUniversal. To date, El Rey has developed a strong scripted slate, and is making strides into unscripted with production starting on its

first original series, the barbershop-focused *Cutting Crew*, which joins filmmaker series *El Rey Network Presents: The Director's Chair* and a *lucha libre* wrestling program from producer Mark Burnett.

The network's English-language platform, original programming and focus on second- and third-generation Latino Americans represents a shift in the U.S. Hispanic unscripted market, which is now trying to reach these audiences – whose buying power is predicted to reach US\$1.5 billion in 2015 – by carving specific niches through original content and appealing to myriad viewers with English.

"From our perspective, it's the next generation that dreams and wakes up and thinks in English, and they don't see themselves in television," says Fogelman, adding that El Rey won't feature the music competition shows and family-themed series that have come to define Latino-oriented unscripted programming.



Fogelman

“For us, when you think about how one in four children born in the U.S. is Latino, we thought there was an opportunity to create something specifically for them.”

Interestingly, El Rey’s strategy aligns with that of Spanish-language broadcaster Univision, which often out-raises U.S. broadcast networks such as ABC and CBS with its primetime telenovelas and reality formats. In a drive to include more English-language offerings, Univision launched lifestyle- and entertainment-focused cable net Fusion in October 2013, hoping to

“When you think about how one in four children born in the U.S. is Latino, we thought there was an opportunity to create something for them.”

attract English-speaking millennials of Hispanic descent.

Gabriela Cocco-Sanchez, vice president of Bunim-Murray Productions’ Hispanic division BMP Latin, considers the creation of a network like Fusion a big step in the right direction.

“I was born in the U.S. to Latino parents that grew up in Miami, and I had a lot of friends who were new to the U.S. as well as friends who were born here,” says the executive, who has led the division with Julio Caro since its launch in January 2013.

“Newer generations are just so much more diverse and integrated naturally and want to hear great stories that are relevant to them,” she says.

BMP Latin’s first initiatives, such as the mixed martial arts competition series *Combate Americas* for Hispanic net mun2, have been Spanish-focused, but Cocco-Sanchez says the group is preparing to bring English-language properties to market that will feature U.S.-born Latino talent “leading very bicultural lives.”

One show follows mixed martial arts fighter Tito Ortiz in a mentoring capacity; a second is a philanthropic-

themed program – produced in English and Spanish – with actor Adam Rodriguez; and a third features journalist Lauren Sanchez in a talk format with a panel of Latino women.

But despite some promising signs, Cocco-Sanchez maintains there are still serious barriers in place that prevent a thriving Hispanic unscripted landscape.

“One of the most basic challenges is trying to enter into a programming slot where the audience is used to strip programming and where primetime is all telenovelas,” says Cocco-Sanchez. “So there aren’t a lot of opportunities to bring new properties, and you’re typically working with weekends, which is a very competitive landscape.”

The exec also points to the issue of budgets for Hispanic unscripted, which have been consistently low and not nearly as sizeable as those allotted in the general market.

“The budgets are growing across the board, but they’re growing slowly,” she says. “And they certainly don’t compare to our general market partners... Right now, there isn’t a ton of money going into traditional docuseries and reality, but I think it’s a matter of time.”

At Discovery Channel, the move towards creating original docuseries and ob-docs for its two Spanish-language counterparts in the U.S. – Discovery en Español and Discovery Familia – is well underway.

Michela Giorelli, vice president of production and development for



Cocco-Sanchez

“The budgets are growing across the board, but they’re growing slowly.”



Giorelli

“When you have local characters and local stories but still maintain the same production values, it’s a good recipe for success.”

Discovery Networks Latin America/U.S. Hispanic, oversees the production unit in charge of original programming for these markets.

She says that an initial focus on natural history and current affairs shows is being actively replaced with a push for docuseries and ob-docs because, much like the general market, Hispanic audiences are responding well to character-driven programming.

This fall, Discovery en Español is launching its first docureality series *Texas Trocas*, an eight-part show following a Latino family in Texas with its own truck customization business. Meanwhile, a Mexico-set docureality series on a garage outside Guadalajara is currently in production for Discovery en Español.

Giorelli says the Spanish-language series will join a number of turbo-themed shows that have been rating well among audiences eager for local adaptations of popular U.S. general market programming.

“When you have local characters and local stories but still maintain the same production values that Discovery generally offers to the viewers, it’s a good recipe for success,” says Giorelli.

Discovery’s Mexican docureality series

is helmed by U.S. prodco High Noon Entertainment, which has taken significant strides in navigating the complex Hispanic unscripted market.

The group launched its Latino division at the end of 2011, and after two years of pitching and acquainting themselves with Hispanic networks, High Noon CEO Jim Berger says his team has three active Spanish-language series in production.

“Each of these networks – not unlike the general market – has their philosophies and what works for them and their audiences, and they’re different, just as the general market is different,” says Berger. “If you’re going to take in a format or a docuseries, you need to know that network, what they value and what their audience composition is.”

Looking ahead, whether networks are adapting shows for Hispanic audiences that meet general market standards, or producing English-language, Latin-themed content to attract all viewers, growing platforms will provide U.S. Hispanic casts and showrunners more opportunities to become household names, and improve the influence and visibility of Hispanic and Latin talent in the general market.

Reflecting on the changes afoot in the industry, Cocco-Sanchez assures that in the future, channel surfing is going to yield a more accurate – and eventually seamless – representation of Hispanic audiences in the U.S.

“As we move forward, we’ll start to see some of this talent just as talent versus necessarily Latino talent. It will be more that they just happen to have that background and they’re interesting,” says Cocco-Sanchez. “It’s very similar to hip hop’s influence back in the day in pop culture. In its birth, it was really black, and now it belongs to everyone. I think you’ll see a similar Latino influence in pop culture, and it will be another piece of the beautiful, diverse pie that is America.” ●



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STARTREKS

BY BARRY WALSH

Star China International Media made a mark on Chinese television and in the formats industry by bringing big formats to China. Now, it's aiming to export its own homegrown hits.

While international formats have been making a huge impact on Chinese television for the last few years, there hasn't yet been a format created and developed in China that has become a global television entertainment fixture.

Vivian Yin, deputy general manager and chief representative at Star China International Media and VP of production arm Starry Production, is hoping to change that with *Sing My Song*, a music competition series developed by Star China and now being shopped internationally by ITV Studios Global Entertainment (ITVS GE).

The deal, announced during MIPTV in April, follows the format's performance on CCTV 3, with its debut season attracting 480 million viewers and a total audience share in China of 37%. According to ITVS GE, it also marks the first time that an original Chinese talent show format has been exported internationally.

"The landscape is changing very rapidly in China, and we think that if we want to be part of the international market, we should be involved in a different way, not only as buyers," says Yin. "We should contribute to the market by bringing our own creativity to the fore and creating our own formats."

Star China's three channels cover the Chinese-speaking audience across Hong Kong, Macau and Southeast Asia. Following China Media Capital's acquisition of a remaining 47% share from 20th Century Fox in 2011, the media group formed a production arm, Starry Production, which produces local versions of such global format phenomenons as *The Voice*, *Got Talent* and *So You Think You Can Dance*.

The emergence of those formats in China, and their massive popularity, has accelerated the importing of international entertainment formats into the region.

"The format industry in China is fairly new – we've been buyers for a couple of years, since *Got Talent* triggered the explosion of foreign formats," explains Yin. "Beforehand, very few foreign formats had been introduced to China and localized, and in some cases not in an ideal way, where the ideas were borrowed and the format not respected."



"But since *Got Talent*, people have started respecting the value of foreign formats."

Now, with *Sing My Song* being taken internationally, the question will be whether global audiences will embrace Chinese entertainment formats. Yin says the twist of the show – with the competition aspect focusing on the song as opposed to the singer – served it well in China, with original songs from the series becoming nationwide hits and providing additional revenue streams as well as increased buzz for the series.

"The original song is the pillar of the music industry. We had 12 singing shows on the air last summer in China, but they're all singing cover songs. Nobody dared to take the risk," she says.

"We've kicked off the pre-auditions for *The Voice of China*," she adds, "and some of the singers have come to those with songs from *Sing My Song*."



Yeter



Karsberg

ZODIAK MAKES FORMAT MOVES

Swedish producers and format developers Joel Karsberg and Cem Yeter are making the move from Zodiak Nordic to Zodiak Americas, where they will lead unscripted development as joint chief creative officers.

The pair will relocate from Sweden to Santa Monica, California, in July, spearheading an unscripted development push that involves adapting international formats for the American marketplace. Both will report directly to Jonny Slow, CEO of Zodiak Americas.

Karsberg previously served as chief creative officer of Zodiak Nordic, while Yeter was CEO of Zodiak-owned prodco Mastiff Sweden. Together, the pair has produced formats such as *Best Singer*, *Dancing with the Stars* and *Copycat Singers*, as well as reality series *Dropped* and *Paradise Hotel*.

Yeter will be replaced at Mastiff by Matilda Snöwall, the former head of factual entertainment and reality at Swedish broadcaster TV4.

"Cem and I have worked together for almost 10 years and during that time we have been fortunate to enjoy huge ratings success in Sweden," said Karsberg in a statement. "More than ever before, a hit show is only a hit when it also succeeds in the U.S., so to have the opportunity to live here and join the highly experienced Zodiak Americas team is a fantastically exciting opportunity for us both."

Slow added: "This exciting double appointment demonstrates Zodiak's

continued drive to grow its U.S. business, this time with key hires from our global talent base. Joel and Cem's numerous connections across the globe will supercharge our ability to develop and adapt new unscripted formats at a time when rapid and effective multi-territory coordination has become crucial to our success."

In related Zodiak news, the global producer has hired Grant Ross to serve as its exec VP of global creative development and format acquisition, in a bid to expand its formats activity.

Ross, who most recently served as global head of acquisitions at Endemol Group, will be responsible for driving Zodiak's global formats business, leading in-house format development and acquiring international formats from around the world.

He will also co-chair Zodiak's newly created international development board alongside Karsberg, through which he will be "responsible for driving creative development across all territories, turning locally produced properties into global formats," Zodiak said.

In a statement, Zodiak Media CEO Marc-Antoine d'Halluin said: "Grant is one of the most highly regarded format experts in the world, and I am delighted to have him onboard in this newly created role to drive and expand Zodiak in the business of global formats." **Manori Ravindran, Adam Benzine**

DANCE MOMS HEADED TO UK

Lifetime's hit *Dance Moms* is headed across the pond for its first format adaptation.

The 8 x 60-minute *Dance Mums* (w/t) will be produced by ITV Studios' UK factual shingle Shiver, and will feature musical theatre star and dance instructor Jennifer Ellison in the starring role.

The action and drama will take place in Ellison's school, The Fame Academy, in Liverpool.

The adaptation of the Collins Avenue series, which is the top-rated unscripted series on Lifetime in the U.S., marks the fourth local commission for Lifetime in the UK since it launched in November of 2013, following *The Conversation with Amanda de Cadenet*, *The Proposers*, and the ob-doc *Frisky Business*.

The UK version is currently in production and slated to air later in the year.

"With its mix of superbly talented kids, larger than life personalities and jaw-dropping conflict, *Dance Moms* is one of the most popular reality series on Lifetime," said Heather Jones, VP of programming at A+E Networks UK. "We are committed to investing in original UK content and this new commission will give our viewers the perfect companion series to the show they already love." **BW**

KEO MAKES FORMAT HIRE

Keo Films has hired Damon Pattison to be its creative director for factual entertainment and formats, a newly created position.

He will report to managing director Debbie Manners and oversee the development of the British indie's formats and long-running factual entertainment series.

In 2007, Pattison started the indie prodco Lucky Day Productions, which was acquired by Zodiak Media four years later. His credits include *Disaster Chefs*, *Celebrity Driving Academy*, *Secret Location* and *Love Shaft*.

Before that he was the head of development at Celador Productions where he oversaw entertainment and factual entertainment programs. During that time, he created and exec produced *You Are What You Eat* and *Turn Back Your Body Clock* for Channel 4 and *No Waste Like Home* for BBC2. He also series produced the game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. **Kevin Ritchie •**



Pattison

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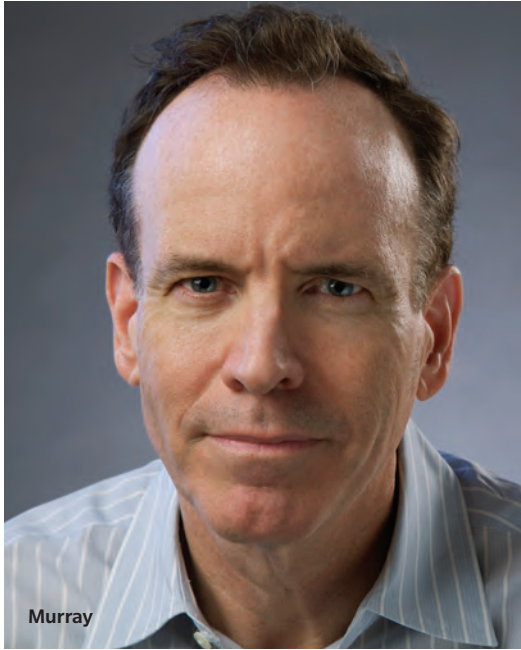
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Building the foundation



Murray

A gift of US\$6.7 million from Bunim/Murray Productions chairman Jonathan Murray to his alma mater, the University of Missouri, is enabling its journalism school to form a documentary journalism program. Here, Murray – who worked in television news and documentary prior to founding his production company – explains how he hopes the program will help journalists acquire the foundational skills and ethical understanding to enrich the media and entertainment landscape.

When I was a junior at the University of Missouri's School of Journalism, one of my assignments was to cover an annual ping-pong-ball drop that was a school tradition. I wanted to tell the story in the style of American broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow, who covered the bombing of London in the Second World War, but I knew I wasn't as eloquent, so I first taped the sounds of students reacting to the ball drop, and later recorded my narration, suggesting I'd spoken extemporaneously as the event unfolded. When I played it for my journalism professor, bragging about my technique, he reacted in horror, explaining that I was deceiving the listener by letting them think I was actually describing the ball drop as it happened.

The experience may have been an early indication that I would take a divergent path from journalism, but my television career has taught me that regardless of whether you're producing *The Real World* or the evening news, your eventual aim is to tell a good, compelling and – most important – an ethically sound story.

I've always felt I owed a great debt to the University of Missouri for the foundational storytelling skills I learned there – not to mention the ethics lessons – and it made sense to contribute something that would enable the school to fill a current void in its curriculum by adding an interest area in documentary journalism, a field that is essential to our discussion of important issues in the U.S. but rarely funded.

When the program kicks off in the fall of 2015, it will offer bachelors of journalism and Master of Arts degrees, and fund research in the field of documentary journalism. Students will have the chance to examine the theory behind the medium, study the history of the field, analyze the great documentaries and grasp the different forms of storytelling available to them. They'll then combine that knowledge with practical experience, making their own short documentaries and getting involved in internships with documentarians.

But regardless of whether students use

the skills they learn at Missouri to go off and make great documentaries that are going to change the world, or work for Discovery Channel making non-fiction series, that foundation will give them something unique that will set them apart in the marketplace.

The program will instill a comprehensive understanding of ethics, which is a crucial part of production in the entertainment industry, and an area I often wish people working in reality television understood a little better.

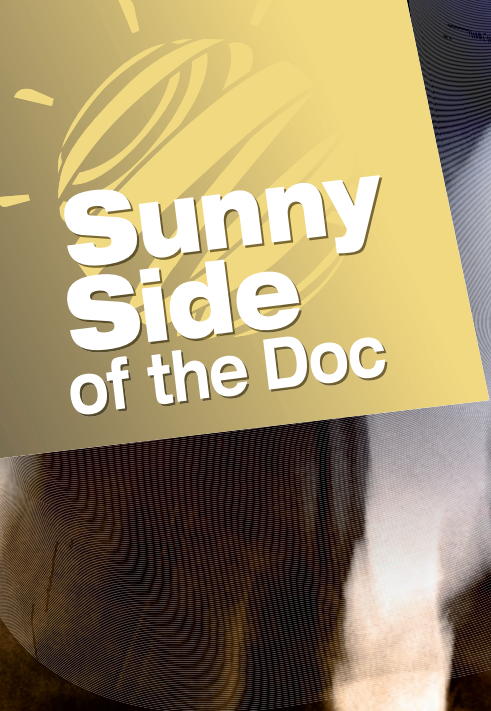
In our field, everything comes in shades of gray, and it's important to be cognizant of what those shades are so you can contemplate the choices you're making and not just blindly do them. Ultimately, it's up to each individual producer and network as to where they draw the line on what they consider acceptable or not. I have my own personal standards which I uphold in what we do at Bunim/Murray. I raise those questions with my showrunners as we go into each project, but I worry that people who haven't had the same training are making choices that are detrimental to the genre.

As such, there must always be a debate around the fine points of what happens when you get out into the field and what choices you have to make on-site and back in the edit room. Ethics should be thoroughly discussed so that when a student graduates and begins their career, they have a foundation they can apply as they start to do their own work.

We are in the midst of a very exciting time for documentary and reality producers because there are a wealth of opportunities and platforms to tell stories. The program at Missouri will primarily teach long-form documentary storytelling, but it will equip students to go in any direction they desire.

Ultimately, journalism school made me a better reality producer, and I hope the documentary journalism program at Missouri will do the same for the next generation of storytellers, wherever they choose to apply their talents.

As told to Manori Ravindran •



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Walking proud

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

Few trends in unscripted television programming are able to challenge the timeless attraction of the circus (sex and nudity spring to mind – for more on those, see page 29).

As live events increasingly become cornerstones of TV schedules, daredevils are finding new lives as multi-hyphenate television stars. Nik Wallenda, a life-long circus performer and descendant of famed wire walker Karl Wallenda, has parlayed his penchant for risk-taking stunts into cable ratings gold and a book deal.

In 2012, the 35-year-old's wire walk across Niagara Falls for ABC attracted 13 million and a year later roughly the same number tuned in to *Skywire Live with Nik Wallenda* on Discovery Channel to watch him walk – untethered – across Arizona's Little Colorado River Gorge.

Up next: a walk between skyscrapers in Chicago in *Skyscraper Live*, the second in a series of three planned untethered live tightrope walks for Discovery (Wallenda is negotiating to do more). That will air this fall, but before that feat, he will accept the 2014 Realscreen Awards Personality of the Year honor in June.

Why did you choose Chicago for the next tightrope walk?

Growing up I performed there many times in circuses. I love the city. I love the skyline. My family's career has always been surrounded by skyscrapers. My grandfather built a career and a name on skyscrapers. As I did more research on where to do my next walk, I thought, "Where was the first skyscraper?" And it was Chicago [the 10-story Home Insurance Building, erected in the late 1800s]. All these things came in play and I was like, "This was meant to be."

How involved are you in the planning?

It's my life, so I'm involved in every engineering meeting and every rigging meeting. I'm hands on with most of my rigging as well and definitely 100% hands on in design, the testing and obviously, the training. My uncle is my lead engineer. My father is my safety coordinator and he oversees all the rigging. He's a genius when it comes to that stuff. It's a family thing. Who do you trust with your life? My father would be the first and foremost.

What does the training entail?

Wind machines. I've trained in winds of 120mph in the past. I've trained in snowstorms and a tropical storm in Florida with 60mph winds with heavy downpours. The only thing I can't deal with is lightning. I'm a lightning rod so that's what I avoid.

Why does the walk have to be life or death?

That's part of the thrill that people watch for – the fact that this dude could lose his life.

But on a personal level, why do life or death scenarios appeal to you?

I'm carrying on a legacy that's over 200 years old. I want to make sure the next 10 generations are still going strong and that people don't forget who the Wallendas are. I'm confident in the training that I have. It's life or death when I get in my car and drive home. When I get on an airplane, it's life or death. We never know if it's our last day so I look at it all as being relative.

I walk on a cable the size of a nickel in the clouds and I'm comfortable doing that because I've done it my whole life. You don't get scared when you get in a car and drive because you've done it for so long. I'm very in control of what I do – other than Mother Nature – but I'm not in control of the driver in the other car. I consider what I do to be a very calculated risk. •

After the success of *Skywire Live*, Nik Wallenda will take on the Chicago skyline next.



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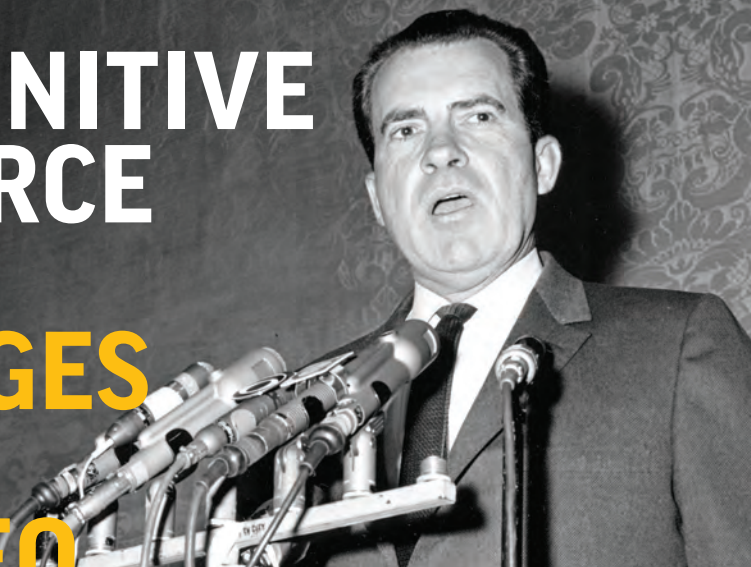
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